



Gfeller-Waller/NCHSAA Concussion Management Guiding Principles



Health and Safety Personnel

Licensed Physician - Physician Licensed to Practice Medicine (MD or DO) under Article 1 of Chapter 90 of the General Statutes and has training in concussion management.

Licensed Athletic Trainer (LAT) - An individual who is licensed under Article 34 of Chapter 90 of the General Statutes entitling them to perform the functions and duties of an athletic trainer.

Licensed Physician Assistant (PA) - Any person who is licensed under the provisions of G.S. 90-9.3 to perform medical acts, tasks, and functions as an assistant to a physician.

Licensed Nurse Practitioner (NP) - Any nurse approved under the provisions of G.S. 90-18(14) to perform medical acts, tasks or functions.

First Responder (FR) - A first responder must meet the requirements set forth by the North Carolina State Board of Education Policy ATHL-000.

Key Tenets of Concussion Management

1. **No athlete with a suspected concussion is allowed return to practice or play the same day that his or her head injury occurred.**
2. **Athletes should never return to play or practice if they still have ANY symptoms.**
3. A concussion is a traumatic brain injury that can present in several ways and with a variety of signs, symptoms, and neurologic deficits that can present immediately or evolve over time.
4. Both academic and cognitive considerations should be addressed when managing a student-athlete with a concussion. The NC Dept. of Public Instruction now requires a "Return to Learn" plan for students with suspected head injury. Also, consider guidance on proper sleep hygiene, nutrition, and hydration.
5. More than one evaluation is typically necessary for medical clearance for concussion. Due to the need to monitor concussions for recurrence of signs and symptoms with cognitive or physical stress, Emergency Room and Urgent Care physicians typically should not make clearance decisions at the time of first visit.
6. In order to clear an athlete to return to sport without restriction, an athlete should be completely symptom-free both at rest AND with cognitive stress, then with full physical exertion (i.e. has completed **Return to Play Protocol**).
7. It is not feasible for a provider to diagnosis an acute concussion and provide clearance on the same day.

NCHSAA specific requirements regarding the Gfeller-Waller Concussion Awareness Law as defined by NCHSAA Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC)

1. All member school student-athletes must have a Licensed Physician's (MD/DO) signature on the **RETURN TO PLAY FORM and/or Medical Provider Concussion Evaluation Form**. If the physician has signed the **Medical Provider Concussion Evaluation Form** both the Return to Play Protocol and decision to release of the student athlete to full participation in athletics may be delegated to the Licensed Athletic Trainer.
2. The physician signing the **RETURN TO PLAY FORM** and/or the **Medical Provider Concussion Evaluation Medical Recommendation Form** is licensed under Article 1 of Chapter 90 of the General Statutes and has training in concussion management.
3. Physicians may choose to delegate aspects of the student-athlete's care to a licensed athletic trainer, licensed nurse practitioner or licensed physician assistant who is working under that physician's supervision, and may work in collaboration with a licensed neuropsychologist in compliance with the Gfeller-Waller Concussion Law for RTP clearance.