

## **Preseason Medical Evaluations**

A letter for Doctors and Parents,

The Rhode Island Interscholastic League (RIIL) Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC) is a group of health care providers and athletic administrators dedicated to ensuring the health and safety of Rhode Island's interscholastic student athletes. With that goal in mind, the RIIL SMAC promotes policies and initiatives aimed at enhancing the well-being of Rhode Island's student athletes. We are not a legislative body; therefore, any initiatives promoted by the RIIL SMAC are suggestions and not law.

As you know, the beginning of the 2015-2016 academic year is rapidly approaching and with the start of the school year comes the fall athletic season. Participants in interscholastic athletics are required by their school districts to provide documentation of a "sports physical" verifying that they are medically cleared to safely participate in athletics. Your offices will soon be receiving requests for "sports physicals" or forms medically "clearing" students for participation in athletics. The RIIL SMAC recommends a sports specific pre-participation medical history and physical examination or "PPE" for every student athlete. The PPE strives to assess the risk of illness or injury from sports participation. The RIIL recognizes and supports the physical and psychological benefits derived from the participation in athletics. The optimum benefit of sports participation, however, is achieved only when the safety and well-being of each athlete is accounted for.

The PPE may result in the need for further medical evaluation in light of certain findings or medical conditions. The PPE may also necessitate modifications in the student athlete's sports participation to insure adequate safety. Despite this, the spirit of the PPE is to find every possible pathway for the safe participation of sport for all student athletes.

The RIIL SMAC recognizes that family physicians, pediatricians and sport medicine specialists have unique insights into the lives and medical conditions of their patients and are keenly aware of any conditions pertinent to participation in interscholastic athletics, including history of concussion, cardiac disease, and orthopedic injuries. Therefore, completion of the pre-participation physical exam (PPE) by the patient's family physician, pediatrician, or sports medicine specialist is ideal. The American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) in conjunction with several other medical societies have developed a PPE form (see attached) designed to provide both primary care physicians and sports medicine specialists with an up-to-date resource to help improve patient safety regarding participation in athletics. Both the RIAFP and RIAAP are familiar with this PPE form. The RIIL SMAC hopes you will consider the use of this form in determining whether or not student athletes in your practice can safely participate in athletics.

If you are interested in learning more about PPEs, please contact your professional organization (RIAFP/RIAAP) or email George Finn, Chairman of the RIIL SMAC ([finng@bpsmail.org](mailto:finng@bpsmail.org)) for the names of physicians who have volunteered to assist RI medical providers with this information.

Although it is ideal to have the athlete's family physician, pediatrician or sports medicine specialist clear his or her patients for athletic participation, there are a variety of reasons why this sometimes may not happen. As we're sure you are aware, insurance companies provide reimbursement for only one physical per year. If a student athlete has already had his or her yearly physical, any additional visits for pre-participation physical exams (PPEs) or for clearance to participate in interscholastic athletics are generally not reimbursed. In addition, student athletes and their families often do not realize the need for a PPE until weeks or days before the beginning of a sports season, which creates scheduling issues for already busy offices and issues of access for student athletes.

Members of the RIIL SMAC are beginning work with the RIAFP, RIAAP, and department of public health to determine how to best facilitate a system where family physicians, pediatricians, and sports medicine specialists can conduct PPEs in a way that increases access for patients and decreases the administrative burden on physicians. While we work towards this common goal, the RIIL SMAC has compiled a list of physician practices which are providing low or no cost PPEs for student athletes who are unable to otherwise receive medical clearance for participation in athletics prior to the start of the fall sports season. If your office is having difficulty accommodating the demand for PPEs, please feel free to provide your patients with the resources in the table below.

<b>Rhode Island PPE Resources (In alphabetical order)</b>			
<b>Practice</b>	<b>PPE Date/Time</b>	<b>Location/ Phone Number</b>	<b>Cost</b>
<b>Affinity Sports Medicine</b>	Thursday 8/6/15 9am-5pm -- <i>By Appointment</i> Paperwork online at <a href="http://carenewengland.org/sports-medicine/">http://carenewengland.org/sports-medicine/</a> <b>Click on Downloadable Forms</b>	5750 Post Road East Greenwich, RI 02818 (401) 681-2858	<b>\$10/PPE</b> Administrative Fee
<b>Foundry Sports Medicine</b>	Saturday 8/1/15 9am-12pm <i>Walk-ins till 11am</i> <i>Prefer you call for appointment</i>	285 Promenade Street Providence, RI 02908 (401) 459-4008 x128	<b>\$10/PPE</b> Administrative Fee
<b>South County Orthopedics</b>	Tuesday 8/4/15 5pm-8pm	1 High Street Wakefield, RI 02879 (401) 789-1422	<b>FREE</b>
<b>University Orthopedics</b>	Saturday 8/1/15 8am-12pm	100 Butler Drive Providence, RI 02906 (401) 330-1433	<b>FREE</b>

We are all working toward the common goal of the health and well-being of Rhode Island's interscholastic athletes and appreciate any feedback regarding the RIIL Pre-participation Physical Exam Initiative. We thank you for your excellent care of Rhode Island's student athletes and your consideration of this letter.

Sincerely,

Rhode Island Interscholastic League  
Sports Medicine Advisory Committee  
Pre-participation Physical Exam Initiative