2026-27 MHSAA SPORTS MEDICINE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES
Thursday, October 22, 2026, 9:30 a.m. – Virtual

MEMBERS PRESENT
Dr. Camy Chapin, Lansing
Dr. Corey Dean, Ypsilanti
Hud Derneika, Ann Arbor
Julie Felten, Frankenmuth
Jacob Kellersohn, Ann Arbor
Dr. Edwin Kornoelje, Grand Rapids
Dr. Dallas Lintner, Owosso
Jason Malloy, Westland
Paris McCarthy, Eastpointe
Kelly Salter, Birmingham
Mitch Smelis, Fenton
Eric Talsma, Hamilton
Cindy Tyzo, West Bloomfield
Dr. Alyssa Vermeulen, Lansing

MHSAA STAFF
Cole Malatinsky
Kathy Vruggink Westdorp (Recorder)

The MHSAA Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC) serves its membership by focusing on a single mission—supporting the health, safety, and well-being of students who participate in interscholastic athletics. SMAC provides guidance and expertise on medical and safety issues that impact school sports across Michigan. The committee works closely with the Representative Council, MHSAA staff, and sport committees to ensure that policies, rules, and recommendations reflect current best practices in sports medicine.

The committee goals include:
1. Offer advice and collaboration on medical and safety concerns related to interscholastic sport rules, regulations, and guidelines.
2. Monitor, evaluate, and distribute up-to-date information on sports medicine and student health to member schools.
3. Review and create resources that help schools promote safe participation and informed decision-making.
4. Partner with MHSAA sport committees to identify and address issues that affect athlete health and safety.
5. Help prioritize and research new areas in sports medicine that may influence school athletics.

SMAC's work reflects the educational mission of the MHSAA and the unique needs of students in grades 6–12. Every recommendation aims to enhance the safety, learning, and overall experience of student-athletes across the state.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

MINUTES/REPORTS/UPDATES FROM COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES
The minutes from the April 16, 2026, meeting were reviewed and approved.

Dr. Ed Kornoelje reported no unusual injury or illness trends, and Dr. Corey Dean described a relatively typical football season and raised questions about the relationship between artificial turf conditions, field maintenance and injury incidence. Dr. Camy Chapin reported routine viral illnesses, an increase in mononucleosis, and observations involving patellar dislocations and ACL injuries, while also expressing interest in playing surface research. Dr. Alyssa Vermeulen raised concerns about energy drink consumption, nutrition, and inadequate sleep among adolescents, and Dr. Dallas Lintner similarly noted anxiety across sports and genders, overuse injuries, and energy drink use. Eric Talsma raised concerns about school-related social media bullying and the effects on student mental health.

Jacob Kellersohn discussed mental health concerns associated with overtraining, insufficient rest, cell phone use, time-management difficulties and social-media comparisons, including pressures associated with personal branding. He also referenced anxiety diagnoses among high school athletes, as well as the effect of PBA and NIL on the health of student-athletes, and the importance of maintaining an education-based athletic focus.

2026-27 CONCUSSION UPDATE
MHSAA staff reviewed preliminary 2025-26 head injury reporting data. Of 3,833 suspected concussion reports, 3,311 were included after removing duplicates, reporting errors and other exclusions. An increase of 7.9% in reporting from the prior year was noted. Football, girls soccer, ice hockey, wrestling and girls basketball continued to have the highest reported rates.

2026-27 FOOTBALL CONCUSSION SURVEY – PROPOSED QUESTIONS
The committee reviewed proposed questions for a football survey on Guardian Caps and other helmet add-ons, including their use during practices and games, and the types of products. Additional survey questions included playing surfaces and the age of artificial turf. It was suggested that additional questions be developed concerning turf maintenance schedules and padded versus unpadded surfaces. Staff discussed whether athletic directors might be better positioned than coaches to answer facility-maintenance questions. The survey will initially focus on football, with possible expansion to other sports following review of the results. The committee approved moving forward with the questionnaire.

UPDATE MEETING RESULTS
MHSAA staff reviewed the student health, safety and welfare portion of the 2026 Update Meeting survey. Of 498 survey records, 209 included an entry and 121 contained substantive comments. Mental health and emotional well-being were the most frequently identified concerns, followed by vaping and other substance use, nutrition and healthy fueling, injury prevention and emergency readiness, and team culture and digital safety. Staff emphasized that the open-ended comments reflect concerns raised by respondents rather than statewide prevalence and invited recommendations for additional resources and educational materials.

NFHS SPORTS SUMMIT REPORT
Staff summarized the NFHS Sports Summit, which brought together leaders from across the United States. From a sports medicine perspective, the discussion centered on using injury data to inform rules-writing and equipment decisions, including concerns about boys lacrosse helmets and the lack of back-of-the-head coverage, as well as football helmet add-ons. It was noted that helmet add-ons appear more prevalent in practices than in games.

USE OF PEPTIDES IN HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS
The committee discussed increasing questions about peptides promoted online for muscle development, weight loss and other uses. Dr. Corey Dean reported that a sports nutritionist in his network has received inquiries from young athletes. Dr. Camy Chapin reported more questions in her primary care practice over the past year and emphasized the limited evidence concerning safety and effectiveness, particularly in adolescents. Members noted NCAA restrictions involving certain peptides and the need for careful education rather than assuming such products are safe. MHSAA staff indicated that additional informational resources may be considered.

MHSAA MULTI-SPORT PARTICIPATION SURVEY SUMMARY REPORT
The 2025-26 Multi-Sport Participation Survey received usable responses from 560 of 759 member schools (73.8%). Approximately 45.3% of the 141,000 student-athletes represented participated in multiple sports. Participation increased from approximately 38% in Class A to 64% in Class D; three-sport participation was approximately 8% in Class A compared with 23% in Class D. Boys participated in multiple sports at a higher rate than girls (approximately 48% versus 42%). Staff

noted generally positive longer-term trends since the survey began in 2017-18, although participation has been relatively stable in Classes A, B and C in recent years. The committee also reviewed the May 2026 NFHS Sport Specialization Position Statement and its discussion of injury risks associated with specialization.

Members discussed potential links between specialization, injury, athlete identity and parental expectations. There was a request to analyze participation fees alongside the survey. Another member suggested examining participation by sport and the influence of travel programs. Staff indicated that those questions were not collected directly in the survey but might be explored by pairing up other available data. Also discussed was the pressure from club and travel coaches, including recruiting messages and financial incentives. It was noted that the challenge of communicating the benefits of multi-sport participation to parents was not always well-received. Burnout, overuse injuries, and the potential mental health consequences of an identity centered on a single sport were reviewed, and members described the social and financial factors that may reinforce year-round participation in clubs. Staff invited further ideas for communicating the benefits of multi-sport participation.

HIGH SCHOOL RIO ATHLETIC TRAINER RECRUITMENT

The committee was asked to assist with recruiting at least 10 certified athletic trainers from Michigan for the 2026-27 High School RIO injury surveillance initiative. Participating athletic trainers would receive school-specific injury reports, continuing education credit and an incentive. Staff explained that broader participation would strengthen the usefulness of national injury data; Michigan had previously had three participating athletic trainers. Members were encouraged to recommend potential participants.

NFHS HIGH SCHOOL TODAY SPORTS MEDICINE ARTICLES

The committee received recent NFHS resources addressing lightning and thunder, heat-related illness, air quality, concussion return-to-play, pre-event medical meetings, medical devices, wrestling skin infections, hazing and student-athlete mental health. Members were encouraged to recommend other resources that might be useful to schools.

GAME SUSPENSION GUIDANCE REVIEW

Staff reviewed updated MHSAA game suspension guidance, which permits consideration of independently validated lightning detection devices or mobile weather applications, including detection of lightning within 10 miles. The fundamental requirement is to suspend activity upon hearing thunder or seeing lightning and postpone the applicable 30-minute time period. The discussion also addressed limited circumstances involving distant visible lightning at night and the importance of clear responsibility for weather decisions and evacuation procedures. A member described the value of officials identifying the person responsible for weather monitoring before a contest. Staff emphasized the need to strengthen evacuation planning and communication.

HEAT AND HUMIDITY POLICY REVIEW

The committee reviewed the MHSAA heat and humidity policy, developed in 2013, and considered whether wet-bulb globe temperature (WBGT) measurements should supplement or replace heat-index guidance. Staff noted that WBGT accounts for additional environmental conditions, but equipment costs and school resources must also be considered. Mitch Smelis described the challenges athletic trainers face when recommending practices that exceed the minimum MHSAA guidance and emphasized the need for improved education, prevention, event planning, recognition, and immediate response to heat illness. Members discussed the importance of cooling equipment, medical coverage, and emergency readiness, particularly at off-campus venues. Dr. Corey Dean encouraged attention to athletes and activities at increased risk, including football conditioning.

While no revised policy was adopted at this meeting, the committee agreed to form a work group to review the current policy, evaluate WBGT and heat-index approaches, and consider clearer resources and messaging for schools. Participants identified during the meeting included Mitch Smelis, Kelly Salter, Dr. Edwin Kornoelje, Julie Felten, and Dr. Corey Dean.

AIR QUALITY POLICY REVIEW
The committee reviewed the existing air quality guidance, including recommendations to reduce outdoor exertion when the Air Quality Index exceeds 150 and to postpone or cancel activities when sustained levels above 200 are anticipated. No policy change was proposed during the discussion.

MEDICAL TIME OUT
Members discussed ways to increase use of the pre-event Medical Time Out and the practical difficulty of assembling all personnel at once. Mitch Smelis and Kelly Salter explained that athletic trainers often communicate separately with officials, EMS and other responders as they arrive. Smelis recommended updating the current template to reflect revised lightning guidance. Staff indicated that the template would be reviewed for potential updates.

MENTAL HEALTH EMERGENCY ACTION PLANS
The committee considered whether a distinct mental health emergency action plan or additional school guidance would be beneficial. Jacob Kellersohn emphasized the importance of both immediate crisis response and established referral relationships for follow-up care. Kelly Salter noted that school crisis teams may not be available after the school day, particularly when coaches are not school employees. Mitch Smelis identified athletic training association resources addressing emergency and non-emergency mental health situations. Staff indicated that additional resources could be reviewed and promoted to member schools.

PREPARTICIPATION PHYSICAL EVALUATION (PPE) – 6TH EDITION
Staff reported that the sixth edition of the Preparticipation Evaluation (PPE) was released on October 15, 2026. Updates include material on abuse and sexual violence, cancer survivors, sports nutrition and supplements, expanded mental health and disability content, streamlined history and examination forms, and more detailed medical eligibility categories. The edition continues to identify physicians, nurse practitioners and physician assistants, subject to state law, as qualified examiners. Staff also described a distinction between medical eligibility information shared with non-medical school personnel and clinical information retained in the medical record. Dr. Corey Dean asked about transitioning to electronic forms; staff indicated that this option is under consideration. Dr. Camy Chapin raised concerns that the April 15 physical date requirement can conflict with insurance coverage and continuity of primary care. Dr. Alyssa Vermeulen and Dr. Dean suggested that electronic systems might reduce administrative barriers to a rolling annual examination date. Staff indicated that the issue may warrant further review.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION/CONSIDERATIONS
Kelly Salter suggested a future presentation on eating disorders and identified potential educational resources. She also referenced resources on energy drinks and performance-enhancing substances from the Taylor Hooton Foundation. Members shared additional links and were encouraged to forward materials for future consideration.

NEXT MEETING DATE/ADJOURNMENT
The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 15, 2027, at 9:30 a.m. The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m.