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Dignity Health and the California Interscholastic Federation Partner on Concussion Education Program for High School Athletes

SAN FRANCISCO – APRIL 24, 2019 – Nearly one million high school athletes in California will be safer thanks to a new partnership announced today between Dignity Health and the California Interscholastic Federation (CIF). Student athletes across the state will now have access to the Dignity Health Concussion Network before taking to the track or field.

The Dignity Health Concussion Network is designed to provide young athletes the knowledge and tools to prevent and identify concussions in themselves and their teammates. The program offers concussion education to high school athletes through an online curriculum pre- and post-concussion assessment testing, and telehealth software that gives athletic trainers and physicians 24/7 access to consultation with a neurologist specializing in concussions and traumatic brain injuries.

Dignity Health's partnership with CIF will expand efforts under way to prevent head trauma and injuries among young athletes. Research shows that excessive or improperly treated concussions can cause long-term damage that can disrupt life and learning—persistent headaches, sleep disturbance, personality changes, and cognitive deficits. High school athletes sustain approximately 300,000 concussions annually, accounting for 15 percent of all sport-related injuries at this level.

CIF is the governing body for high school sports in the state of California and represents 1,606 public and private member schools and more than 918,100 student-athletes. The organization will launch and offer concussion education at the start of fall sports in 2019. CIF conducts regional and state championships in 22 sports including, badminton, basketball, cross country, football, golf, soccer, swimming and diving, tennis, track and field, volleyball, water polo, and wrestling.

“Partnering with CIF to bring the Dignity Health Concussion Network to all of California’s young athletes will help us to continue to change the dialogue and general understanding of concussions,” says Dr. Javier Cárdenas, neurologist, director of the Barrow Concussion and Brain Injury Center, and physician champion of Dignity Health Concussion Network. “Ten years ago, a young athlete with a ‘bump on the head’ would have been allowed to return to sports as soon symptoms had cleared. That has changed. Research, media coverage, and education have provided a better understanding of concussions—this partnership brings that understanding directly to the student athletes of California.”

The concussion curriculum, Barrow Brainbook, was developed by Dr. Cárdenas from Barrow Neurological Institute at Dignity Health St. Joseph’s Hospital and Medical Center in Phoenix, Ariz. and is the first and only education and testing module for student athletes mandated in the nation.

Barrow Brainbook is a web-based learning tool developed specifically for high school athletes. Designed to resemble a sports casting show, it offers students a fun-to-navigate series of educational activities and videos. The program uses videos from local high-profile athletes and a Q&A format which focuses on prevention, recognition, and appropriate responses to concussions. Students must score 80 percent or higher on each module to receive their certificate of completion and be eligible to participate in their sport.

Since 2015 Dignity Health Concussion Network has educated 20,000 California high school student athletes about concussions.

“Partnering with CIF will help us reach even more student athletes to educate them about concussion safety,” says Fred Najjar, senior vice president of philanthropy and system chief philanthropy officer of Dignity Health. “This would not have been possible without our committed donors and partners. They’ve enabled young athletes to be taught about concussions, athletic trainers and physicians to have access to physicians, and for baseline concussion testing to take place.”

The Dignity Health Concussion Network was piloted, launched, and is supported by Dignity Health Foundation. The foundation focuses on aiding youth and under-served communities that need help but often lack the voice and resources to ask for it. Dignity Health Foundation’s community focus is an extension of Dignity Health’s commitment to health care as a basic human right. In line with its mission, the foundation directs philanthropic support for high-quality, affordable, compassionate health care services that meet each person’s physical, emotional, and spiritual needs.

Learn more about the Dignity Health Concussion Network [here](#). To experience the Barrow Brainbook Program, visit the CIF website [here](#).

About Dignity Health

Dignity Health is a multi-state nonprofit network of 10,000 physicians, more than 60,000 employees, 41 acute care hospitals, and 400-plus care-centers, including community hospitals, urgent care, surgery and imaging centers, home health, and primary care clinics in Arizona, California, and Nevada. Dignity Health is dedicated to providing compassionate, high-quality, and affordable patient-centered care with special attention to the poor and underserved. In FY 2018, Dignity Health provided \$2.1 billion in charitable care and services. Dignity Health is a part of CommonSpirit Health, a nonprofit health system committed to advancing health for all people and dedicated to serving the common good. For more information, please visit our website at www.DignityHealth.org.

About the California Interscholastic Federation (CIF)

The CIF was created in 1914 and is the governing body for high school sports in the state of California. CIF is uniquely positioned to foster student growth in values and ethics. CIF’s ideal of “Pursuing Victory with Honor,” provides the opportunity to influence the actions of the athletic community. CIF strives to promote equity, quality, character and academic development. CIF is a nonprofit federation and the state office, located in Sacramento, Calif., represents the interests of its member Sections. The 10 Sections represent geographic regions within the state: Central, Central Coast, Los Angeles City, North Coast, Northern, Oakland, Sac-Joaquin, San Diego, San Francisco and Southern. CIF represents 1,606

public and private member schools and more than 838,000 student-athletes. CIF conducts Regional and State Championships in badminton, cross country, football, volleyball, tennis, wrestling, basketball, soccer, swimming & diving, track & field, golf and water polo. CIF Sections conduct championships in more than 22 sports.