

# The Coach Safely Sports Safety Initiative

**Changing the Culture of Youth Sports (thru policy, research, education and technology)**

**The Problem:** The increased prevalence and awareness of concussions and youth sports injuries has led to decreased participation across the nation further compounding and contributing to the epidemic of childhood obesity in Alabama and across the nation. The attrition of children out of organized sports before age 14 is over 70%. Surveys indicate that coaching behavior, including risk of injury, as one of the causes.

The CDC declared youth sports injuries (concussions, cardiac events, heat illness, overuse and trauma) as an epidemic estimating that >50% are preventable through awareness and education. The Aspen Institute's 2015 report found an 8% annual decline in youth sports (a \$30 billion industry) participation; elevating health consequences, including youth diabetes. Reported annual costs include; \$20 billion for injuries to athletes aged 15 years and older; \$560 billion in lost productivity by 2030; cost of legal liability has yet to be estimated. An athletic trainer (ATC) is a key medical extender but only 38% of U.S. communities have ATC coverage. No authoritative data exists for the population of younger athletes, aged 14 and under, which is five times larger than the nation's population of aged 15 and older athletes that are subject to the coaching education guidelines of the High School athletics associations.



## **The Requirements:**

Increasing the safety and participation in youth sports and improving the health across the nation requires a multi-faceted approach.

- Access to the right care information and the right care at the right time.
- A comprehensive plan achieved through collaborative research and multi-disciplinary systems
- National policy promotion for a mandated youth sports safety education course
- Comprehensive telehealth solutions to extend access of elite sports care across the nation

## **The Coach Safely Initiative:**

Alabama House Bill 9, known as The Coach Safely Act, was enacted into Law by the Legislature in March 2018. The bill (the first of its kind in the US) was offered by sports injury prevention advocates based at UAB in response to national recommendations from the Institute of Medicine, the American College of Sports Medicine and the Aspen Institute to mandate coaching education for state organizations that sponsor youth sports for athletes aged 14 and under.



Coach Safely has the course and interactive assets to deliver its video-based training through its learning management system and certification registry. It also has the cooperation of the Alabama State Department of Public Health to implement, enforce and administer the Act. In addition, Coach Safely has a statewide license for a mobile application for injury reporting and administrative compliance with Act. To address the engagement of communities, Coach Safely has an agreement with the largest provider of athletic trainers in

the state of Alabama.

**The Deliverables:**

Along with UAB’s multi-disciplinary involvement, grants and Industry support, the creation of a multi-functional mobile technology platform would enable features such as:

- Health behavior intervention strategies for community youth sports coaches
- An Athletic Trainer triage outreach strategy using direct engagement and telehealth.
- A data system platform that reconciles the youth sports organization’s administrative burden of disparate medical forms required for participation and risk management; and a data collection strategy for use as research for the stakeholders.
- Capture demographic and medical information (previous injuries, allergies, etc.) entered by the parent coach that authorizes the coach to use this information to solicit proper care in the absence of the parent.
- An integrated injury reporting platform accessible by all stakeholders (Parent, Coach, Athletic Trainer, Physician, Sports admin., School admin./ nurse).

**Milestones:**

August 2018 - Completion of online animated short video, education and certification registry

September 2018 - Strategic alignment with UAB Orthopedics/Sports Medicine

September 2018 - Beta community pilot program (city of Trussville, AL - Parks and Rec)

January 2019 - Implementation and enforcement of Alabama HB 9, known as Coach Safely Act

July 2019 - Completion of mobile application platform

August 2019 - Coverage of 75% of AL municipalities for education in sports injury prevention

August 2021 - Expand to 3 other states through partnership with UAB and Children’s Hospitals

August 2023 - Become the nationally recognized platform in youth sports injury

## **Current and Potential Key Collaborators**

### **Executors of the Coach Safely Foundation**

- **Point of Contact:** Coach Safely CEO, Dr. Kanti Sunkavalli, MD MBA (UAB); Cell: 205-317-9203, Email; [coachsafely@gmail.com](mailto:coachsafely@gmail.com)
- Chairman, Jack Crowe, MEd, Former Ex. dir. of the American Sports Medicine Institute; UAB Football, consulting director for Athlete Health, Safety and Performance
- President, Drew Ferguson, Director of UAB Sports Medicine at Children's of Alabama, former President of the Alabama Athletics Trainer Association
- Vice-Chair, Coach Bill Clark, UAB Head Football Coach

### **Concept & Policy Influencer Associates of Coach Safely**

- Dr. James R. Andrews, MD, renowned orthopedic sports medicine surgeon and injury prevention advocate. Pioneer in youth sports injury prevention
- Dr. David Satcher, MD, Former (16<sup>th</sup>) U.S. Surgeon General, Co-Chair National Council of Youth Sports Safety, Satcher Health Leadership Inst., Morehouse College of Medicine
- Dr. Brian Hainline, MD, Chief Medical Officer of the NCAA, Aspen Institute Associate
- Dr. Kevin Guskewiez, PhD, Dean of the University of North Carolina School of Arts and Sciences, Executive Director,
- Dr. Eliot Sorel, MD; Professor of Public Health, George Washington University
- Dr. Gerry Gioia, PhD, Neuropsychology, Children's National (D.C.),

### **UAB Collaborators**

- Dr. Jim Hilyer, PhD, Public Health; Retired UAB Asst. Professor in the School of Medicine
- Dr. Reed Estes, MD, Sports Medicine surgeon, UAB/ Children's of Alabama, Team physician
- Dr. Katherine Weiss, OD, MBA, FAAO, Director of UAB Pediatric Optometry Services

### **Potential Collaborators**

- Dr. Laura Dreer, PhD, Neuropsychology, UAB Faculty
- Dr. Marcus Bauman, PhD, Director of the UAB Department of Exercise Medicine
- Dr. Eric Wallace

### **Industry Partners**

- Charlie Wund- CEO, InjuryFree; Coach Safely injury reporting and tracking software
- David Brasfield-CEO, ThreatAdvice; Coach Safely learning management and data registry
- Paul Henderson, Co-owner; Encore Rehab
- Daryl Perkins-CEO Master Solutions; Coach Safely director of policy and government affairs