



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: APRIL 30, 2015**  
**FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:**  
**DAN STAFFORD, ATHLETIC DIRECTOR**  
**517-541-5161**

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### **Charlotte High School to Provide Concussion Testing for Athletes**

Charlotte Public Schools will be offering free concussion testing as part of the ImPACT (Immediate Post-Concussion Assessment and Cognitive Testing) program in partnership with EMPOWER, Hayes Green Beach Memorial Hospital's rehabilitation services provided at ALIVE.

All 2015-2016 Charlotte student athletes in grades 9 through 12 who participate in a contact sport will receive a free baseline test after school from Tuesday, June 2, through Thursday, June 4. It will be mandatory for football, volleyball, competitive cheer, basketball, wrestling, baseball, softball, and soccer participants. The baseline test establishes a pre-concussion measurement that can be compared against a post-concussion test to ensure a safe return to play.

"Head injuries are on the rise," said Derek Sanders, HGB athletic trainer. "It is estimated 4 to 5 million concussions occur annually and the effects can last for years."

ImPACT is the most-widely used, scientifically validated, computerized concussion evaluation system. It provides trained clinicians with neuro-cognitive assessment tools and services that are medically accepted as best practices. While ImPACT cannot prevent head injuries, it is the gold standard used to assess if the brain has fully recovered from an injury. ImPACT helps evaluate an athlete's cognitive status by comparing the baseline test to a post-concussion test.

"Simply put, ImPACT is an excellent tool for health care providers to compare the mental status of an athlete before and after sustaining a concussion," Sanders said. "One of the best aspects about ImPACT testing is health care providers do not have to rely on what the athlete is telling them, or misleading them, about symptoms."

Jeff Finney, Charlotte High School's varsity football coach, welcomes the advanced testing. "Player safety has always been our program's top concern. ImPACT testing will provide us one more tool to better ensure all our players are fit to compete each and every week."

The baseline test takes approximately 25 to 30 minutes to complete and the students can be tested in groups. The test measures attention span, memory, sustained and selective attention time, response variability, non-verbal problem solving, and reaction time.

Sanders, along with Jacob Brown, HGB physical therapist, are undergoing ImPACT certification and will be administering the student athlete testing June 2 through June 4 at the high school. Sanders explained how the program will work:

1. An athlete that was administered the ImPACT test before the season begins suffers a head injury and displays concussion symptoms.
2. He or she is evaluated by the athletic trainer and removed from competitive play.
3. A post-concussion ImPACT test (which is covered by insurance) is administered at ALIVE within 72 hours of the injury.
4. The athlete is then referred to their family physician or an HGB ImPACT-credentialed physician.
5. The physician will use the baseline data and post-concussion data to determine a course for the athlete's safe return to play, rather than relying solely on athlete feedback.

ImPACT is used by the majority of teams in Major League Baseball, the National Hockey League and the National Football League. It is also currently in use by more than 7,400 high schools and 1,000 colleges and universities.

Call the Charlotte High School Athletic Office at 517-541-5160 or EMPOWER at ALIVE at 517-541-5800, option 2 with questions regarding the ImPACT testing.