



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Charlotte Public Schools expands concussion testing to 7th and 8th grades

In 2015, Charlotte Public Schools partnered with Hayes Green Beach Memorial Hospital and ALIVE to provide all Charlotte High School contact sport athletes a free baseline ImPACT (Immediate Post-Concussion Assessment and Cognitive Testing) concussion test. ImPACT baseline testing provides an individualized score that can later be used to compare the brain function of an athlete after he or she sustains a traumatic brain injury.

The program is being expanded to include testing of Charlotte Middle School students for the upcoming school year. The baseline tests will be provided free of charge for Charlotte Middle School and Charlotte High School students participating in CPS-sponsored contact sports: football, volleyball, soccer, competitive cheer, basketball, wrestling, baseball and softball.

ImPACT is the gold standard to assess if the brain has fully recovered from an injury. The program evaluates an athlete's cognitive status by comparing the baseline test to a post-concussion test.

Derek Sanders, athletic trainer, and Jacob Brown, physical therapist, are employed by Hayes Green Beach Memorial Hospital and work at ALIVE. They are certified as ImPACT specialists.

Sanders explained how the ImPACT program works: An athlete who suffers a head injury and displays concussion symptoms is evaluated by the athletic trainer and removed from competitive play. A post-concussion ImPACT test, which is covered by most insurance plans, is administered at ALIVE within 72 hours of the injury. The post-test is the same as the initial baseline test and takes 30 to 40 minutes. The athlete's family can choose to send results to their primary care physician or one of HGB's ImPACT-credentialed physicians.

"This past school year, ImPACT has been a tremendous tool to aid health care providers in determining whether an athlete is ready to return to competition or even back to class," Sanders said. "ImPACT eliminates a lot of the guesswork that goes along with concussion treatment. The health care provider does not have to rely solely on what the athlete relays about their symptoms, especially since young athletes often downplay or even lie about symptoms."

"More than 260 athletes were baseline tested for this past school year. Of those 260, 26 athletes needed to take the ImPACT post-concussion test," Brown said. "And of those 26, 11 had to take the test two or more times because of 'low scores.'"

The ImPACT program is a vital tool to help health care providers determine when an athlete can return to activity, and what treatment options should be performed to help the athlete recover at a faster rate.

“We have had very positive feedback from parents and coaches,” Sanders said.

Consent forms, times of testing and additional details regarding the ImPACT testing will be provided through Charlotte Public Schools’ website. For more information about the ImPACT program, call ALIVE at 541-5800, ext. 2.

Hayes Green Beach Memorial Hospital has been the community’s choice for health care for more than 80 years. HGB is committed to working together in health to provide quality care and enhance the vitality of the community. It expanded its vision beyond providing traditional hospital services to one that promotes health and well-being through ALIVE. Learn more about HGB at www.hgbhealth.com and ALIVE at www.myalive.com.

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