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Dear Pacific District Affiliates,

On February 11, 2017, the Board members of the Pacific District unanimously voted to adopt a concussion protocol, education and awareness program that will take effect in the 2017-2018 season. The program is based on the public school protocol (that now exists in all states within the Pacific District) regarding athlete safety when a concussion is suspected. The basic premise is that, when concussive activity is suspected, an athlete will be removed from play until he/she can be evaluated by a medical professional trained in the diagnosis and treatment of concussions, then cleared to safely return to participation.

Implementation of this protocol requires education. Over the course of the next few months and throughout the 2017-2018 season, resources in the form of workshops, online training, electronic and printed resources will be available from the Pacific District to all affiliates. Parents/guardians, coaches, officials, managers, parents and athletes will all have an ongoing opportunity to be educated on the signs, symptoms and diagnosis of concussions, as well as best practices and courses of treatment in order for an athlete to safely return to participation. It is imperative that athletes understand the signs and symptoms of a potential concussion so they can be an active participant in their own diagnosis and course of treatment.

The attached Parent/Guardian Acknowledgement form, and the corresponding Coach Acknowledgement form, will be part of the required paperwork for athletes within the Pacific District in the 2017-2018 season. In addition, the attached Concussion Evaluation and "Return To Play" document will be required for a player who has been diagnosed with a concussion before returning to participation.

The importance of concussion education, awareness, protocol and safe return to participation cannot be ignored. Concussion is a growing concern for athletes in multiple sports, including ice hockey. In recent years, there has been a major shift in the mindset of reporting concussions and in following the proper recovery protocol to return to participation. While USA Hockey continues to develop programs and support research to reduce the risk of injury in the sport of ice hockey throughout the U.S., the Pacific District recognizes the importance of having concussion-specific protocol and educational programs and materials in place to continually increase the knowledge and exposure to concussion safety for its entire membership.

A program outline and materials will be distributed in the coming weeks. The leadership of the Pacific District thanks its affiliates in advance for their acknowledgement and support of this important initiative. There is no downside to keeping our players healthy and safe, off and on the ice.



USA Hockey, the national governing body for the sport of ice hockey, is a member of the International Ice Hockey Federation and the United States Olympic Committee

