March 18, 2016

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Chairman
Senate Subcommittee on Appropriations
Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education and Related Agencies,
135 Dirksen Senate Office Building,
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Senate Subcommittee on Appropriations
Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education and Related Agencies,
135 Dirksen Senate Office Building,
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman
House Subcommittee on Appropriations
Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education and Related Agencies
2358- B Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
House Subcommittee on Appropriations
Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education and Related Agencies
2358- B Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senators Blunt and Murray and Representatives Cole and DeLauro:

We write to request a $5,000,000 increase for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) National Injury Prevention and Control’s National Concussion Surveillance Study in the FY2017 Labor-Health-Education Appropriations bill. Completion of this survey would make CDC fully responsive to the recommendations issued in the 2013 report by the Institute of Medicine (IOM), now the Health and Medicine Division, entitled Sports Related Concussions in Youth: Improving the Science Changing the Culture. We appreciate your leadership in advancing this initiative forward.

Traumatic brain injuries (TBIs) have been referred to as a “silent epidemic” plaguing our country. An epidemic that we, unfortunately, do not have enough information to properly prevent or treat. To date, all fifty states have enacted legislation to assist with prevention of youth sports related concussions. Each state approach varies, however, and there is still no way to collect information to determine the extent of this problem. CDC, through the Concussion Surveillance Study has the opportunity to collect and analyze this important data.

CDC has crafted a survey that has the capacity to capture data on concussions that is currently missed by our healthcare data sources and other existing data sources. In addition, this methodology will capture youth, along with adult, concussions and TBIs. This national survey should be seen as a game changer in the concussions and TBI fields because it will provide data that currently does not exist. As a nation, we cannot afford for this “silent epidemic” to stay hidden any longer. We need to be equipped with the information to adequately assess and prevent TBIs from occurring. Our doctors, our coaches, our parents, and all athletes need to be informed to protect our individual health and the health of this nation. Now more than ever it is
vital to provide funding for the National Concussion Surveillance Study to successfully combat concussions and TBIs across America.

We applaud you for your previous efforts in this area, and we look forward to working with you to help advance this important initiative.

Sincerely,

ACCESS
American Academy of Neurology
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation
Association of Academic Physiatrists
American Congress of Rehabilitation Medicine
American Counseling Association
American Foundation for the Blind
American Music Therapy Association
American Network of Community Options and Resources (ANCOR)
Association of University Centers on Disabilities
Brain Injury Association of America
Brain Injury Association of Massachusetts
American Therapeutic Recreation Association
Center for Medicare Advocacy
Child Neurology Foundation
Easter Seals
Epilepsy Foundation
General Federation of Women's Clubs
Kids In Danger
National Association for the Advancement of Orthotics and Prosthetics
National Association of County and City Health Officials
NARRTC formally the National Association of Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers
National Association of State Directors of Special Education
National Association of State Head Injury Administrators
National Association of States United for Aging and Disabilities
National Center for Special Education in Charter Schools
Prevention Institute
Safe Kids Worldwide
Safe States Alliance
Society for Public Health Education
The Advocacy Institute
The Child Injury Prevention Alliance
United States Brain Injury Alliance
Vets First, a program of United Spinal Association
Vietnam Veterans of America