



U.S. Council for Athletes' Health
1241 Dublin Road, Suite 100 | Columbus, OH 43205

May 16, 2022

Dear Primary and Secondary Education Committee:

I am writing this letter in support of HB492, which would require secondary school coaches to receive training in mental health.

Our young people are suffering from mental health issues at epidemic levels. According to the Centers for Disease Control, 37% of high school students are dealing with anxiety or depression and this was worsened by the recent pandemic. Further, according to the Pew Research Center, 70% of teens felt that depression and anxiety was a significant concern among their age group.

While exercise and sport are often therapeutic for mental health, high stakes competition, pressure from coaches, parents, peers can often worsen underlying mental health disorders. In the last 10 years, teen suicide rates have increased 33% and suicidal ideation among teens up 25% - these rates are mirrored in high school student athletes.

Coaches spend a great deal of time with high school athletes, approximately 10-14 hours per week during their competitive season. This amount of time and personal relationships developed, allow coaches to observe changes within athletes and their mood states. If properly trained, coaches could potentially spot pending mental health crises as they are developing and direct a student athlete to the proper resources or provide support for that student athlete.

It is imperative for the health and wellness of the young people of Ohio that HB492 be passed! The passage of this bill will save lives. Further, passage of this bill in Ohio will lead other states to pass similar legislation, which will protect the lives of young people nationwide.

As a parent of young athletes, I implore you to support this bill, to protect my children as well as other children across Ohio.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chad Asplund', written over a horizontal line.

Chad Asplund, MD, MPH
Executive Director
U.S. Council for Athletes' Health
Columbus, OH