

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 12/15/09**

**Suffolk County Legislator Brian Beedenbender**

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## **Legislator Beedenbender Praises Passage Of Head Injury Awareness Legislation**

*Aim is to protect youth athletes*

**Hauppauge, NY:** The Suffolk County Legislature today approved unanimously a bill introduced by Legislator Brian Beedenbender (Centereach) aimed at protecting youth athletes and raising head injury awareness. The legislation would require county-contracted youth sports agencies to develop a written policy to address incidents of a possible or actual concussion or other head injury among participants, provide parents with head injury information, and prevent athletes from returning to play until they are medically cleared.

Legislator Beedenbender said, "It is important that we raise awareness related to head injuries among parents and coaches in order to protect youth athletes from the increased risk of sustaining additional injury by returning to play before they fully heal. I commend my colleagues for approving this legislation unanimously."

Suffolk's youth and young adults often play on one or more organized sports teams in order to stay physically fit, build confidence, and learn leadership and teamwork skills. Recently, concussions have become a growing concern among parents and coaches of youth sports. During the 2007-08 school year, high school athletes alone reported approximately 137,000 concussions and it is believed that thousands more went unreported or undiagnosed.

A concussion can sometimes be difficult to detect and often occurs when there is a bump, blow or jolt to the head or body which causes the brain to move rapidly inside the skull. In many instances, an athlete who has suffered a concussion may not exhibit symptoms of the injury for minutes or hours after the incident and does not always lose consciousness. Once a concussion has been sustained by an athlete, they are at an increased risk for sustaining additional concussions while their body heals from the initial injury. Such additional injuries may trigger second impact syndrome, a rare but serious condition that causes permanent brain damage or death.

The 2008 International Conference on Concussion in Sport recommended that athletes under the age of 18 who suffer a concussion refrain from engaging in sports until a doctor declares them completely symptom free.

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