



## Pain Management Awareness

Approximately 1.35 million young athletes suffer a sports related injury every year<sup>1</sup>. Many of these injuries will have some degree of pain associated with them and may require pain management. The Chariho Prevention Task Force is participating in the pain management awareness campaign [thinkaboutpain.com](http://thinkaboutpain.com) (**TAP**) which encourages the parents, guardians, and coaches of our athletes to educate themselves on pain medication when they are prescribed to an athlete.

The first step in assuring that athletes are protected is to consider the following when pain medication is prescribed to an athlete:

1. Does the prescribed medication have **addictive side effects**?
2. Is there an **alternative medication available** that poses less risk of addiction?
3. Are there drug free alternatives such as physical therapy available that can reduce or eliminate the duration of consumption, or the need for pain medication?
4. Is the **duration** of the prescription consistent with the duration that pain medication will be required?
5. If the prescription exceeds the duration or quantity required to effectively mitigate pain, or the pain medication is no longer required, do you know how to **properly dispose** of the excess?
6. **Can the dosage be reduced** over time, or adjusted per the level of pain being mitigated?
7. Who will be managing the consumption of the prescribed drug?
8. Will the drug be stored in a manner that prevents accidental or unwarranted access?
9. Will the athlete being prescribed the medication be an active and aware participant throughout the process?

The Chariho Prevention Task Force is not suggesting that prescribed opioids cannot be an effective component of pain management; we are simply encouraging you to educate yourself on the risks, expectations, and available alternatives when they are prescribed to an athlete in our program. We encourage you to consult with your physicians, educate yourself on any prescribed pain management treatment, and to monitor our athletes throughout the course of any pain management treatment.

## Coaches Matter!

The role that a coach can have on a player's life is significant in youth development. The sports field offers a place to develop both as an athlete and individual, and lessons learned on that field will be carried throughout life. Like parents or teachers, coaches can be hugely influential in helping kids learn about themselves, build relationships with others and overcome obstacles.

- Treat players with respect and encourage them as they learn.
- Be a positive role model.
- Be a clear, consistent communicator and listener.
- Make it safe to fail and learn.

### T.E.A.M APPROACH

**TEACH** the importance to a positive lifestyle on and off the field. This includes good nutrition, proper sleep and staying alcohol and drug-free.

**ENFORCE** good behaviors.

**ADVOCATE** for proper training, nutrition, sleep and alcohol and drug free lifestyle.

**MODEL** the behavior the athletes on the team are expected to demonstrate. Youth are watching adults' behavior on and off the field. Youth also watch how coaches treat the team, other coaches, and the official.

### Be Part of the Team

The Chariho Task Force has representation from parents, youth, law enforcement, schools, healthcare, businesses, and community leaders. We assess local substance use challenges and work together to put in place policies, programs and evidence based practices.

We'd like to thank all of the coaches, umpires, referees, rec directors and volunteers who help provide youth sporting opportunities. Not only are you developing future potential Olympians, you are creating healthy and safe opportunities for youth to grow into healthy and drug free adults. And, that is a true victory for all of our communities!

For more information, please contact Terri Censabella at [Terri.Censabella@chariho.k12.ri.us](mailto:Terri.Censabella@chariho.k12.ri.us)

**Everyone Has a Position to Play!**

