

# **PPE COALITION FOR YOUTH SPORTS HEALTH & SAFETY**

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## **ATHLETES, PHYSICIANS URGE ADOPTION OF NEW MEDICAL SCREENING TOOL**

Survey shows nearly unanimous support for preparticipation evaluations

WASHINGTON—Many more young athletes would be screened for life-threatening or disabling medical problems, if experts who spoke out today prevail. While announcing the updated Preparticipation Physical Evaluation (PPE), proponents urged its widespread adoption and systematic use. Representatives of the six medical societies who developed the new PPE tools teamed up with athletes and other advocates to underscore its potential to keep young athletes healthy.

“The PPE is an essential part of a responsible athletic program,” said former Congressman Jim Ryun, an Olympic medalist and multi-world record holder in track. “These screenings, if done timely and done right, can help prevent the kinds of injuries that can end a career or even a life.”

David Bernhardt, M.D., FAAP, and William Roberts, M.D., served as co-editors of the newly revised “Preparticipation Physical Evaluation, 4th Edition” ([www.ppesportsevaluation.org](http://www.ppesportsevaluation.org)). “Done properly, these evaluations can detect conditions such as heart problems,” Bernhardt said. “In addition, screening and education can possibly prevent complications related to conditions such as diabetes, sickle cell trait, or concussion. That information can allow youngsters to safely practice or play sports.”

Roberts noted that the new version of PPE reflects the latest medical and scientific knowledge and includes information on ethical and legal considerations and on evaluating athletes with special needs. “While the PPE does screen for potentially catastrophic conditions, we also try to catch conditions that can predispose an athlete to injury or illness,” Roberts said. “And, for some adolescents, these evaluations are their entry into and only contact with the health care system. Doing these screenings across the board—and doing them well—is of the utmost importance.”

### **The public agrees**

There’s no argument from the American people about that, according to a new study by the American College of Sports Medicine. Ninety-six percent of Americans feel it’s important for young athletes to be evaluated by a qualified health care professional before they begin playing sports. A similar majority—95 percent—believe such screenings must be conducted in a consistent manner across the U.S. (*Kelton Research online survey representative of the U.S. population, ± 3.1 percent margin of error.*)

### **The PPE Coalition**

Improving the quality and consistency of pre-competition medical evaluations of U.S. student-athletes is the focus of the newly launched PPE Campaign and Coalition for Youth Sports Health and Safety. Members include medical organizations, sports governing bodies and other groups. At the PPE launch event, they called for widespread adoption of the updated PPE tool. “Requirements for preparticipation evaluations vary widely from state to state,” said James R. Whitehead, CEO of the American College of Sports Medicine. “Inconsistent effort gets inconsistent results, and too many problems are slipping through the cracks. Every young athlete deserves a thorough screening by a qualified medical professional. [The PPE Coalition] is determined to see that everyone can play or practice safely.”

## **Background**

The Preparticipation Physical Evaluation, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition, is a collaboration of six leading medical societies:

- American Academy of Family Physicians
- American Academy of Pediatrics
- American College of Sports Medicine
- American Medical Society for Sports Medicine
- American Orthopaedic Society for Sports Medicine
- American Osteopathic Academy of Sports Medicine

The PPE is the definitive guide for physicians and other health professionals who evaluate athletes before training or competition—an essential tool for promoting the health and safety of athletes. The PPE provides the medical background for decisions by the individual athlete's physician or the team physician.

The PPE marks important progress in the movement to ensure the health and safety of youth athletes. Other issues include:

- Heart and lung problems
- Head injury and concussion
- Heat and hydration
- Overuse and overscheduling
- Cultural issues, such as expectations and behavior of athletes, parents, coaches and others

The PPE Coalition for Youth Sports Health and Safety is anchored in promoting the consistent use of high-quality preparticipation evaluations for youth athletes. Activities include:

- Website ([www.ppesportsevaluation.org](http://www.ppesportsevaluation.org))
- Speakers Bureau—Beginning with representatives of the writing team and expanding to offer qualified speakers where needed to build awareness of the importance of the PPE
- Working with policy makers in legislative and administrative bodies
- Building momentum and support for April as National Youth Sports Safety Month ([www.nyssf.org/campaign.html](http://www.nyssf.org/campaign.html))