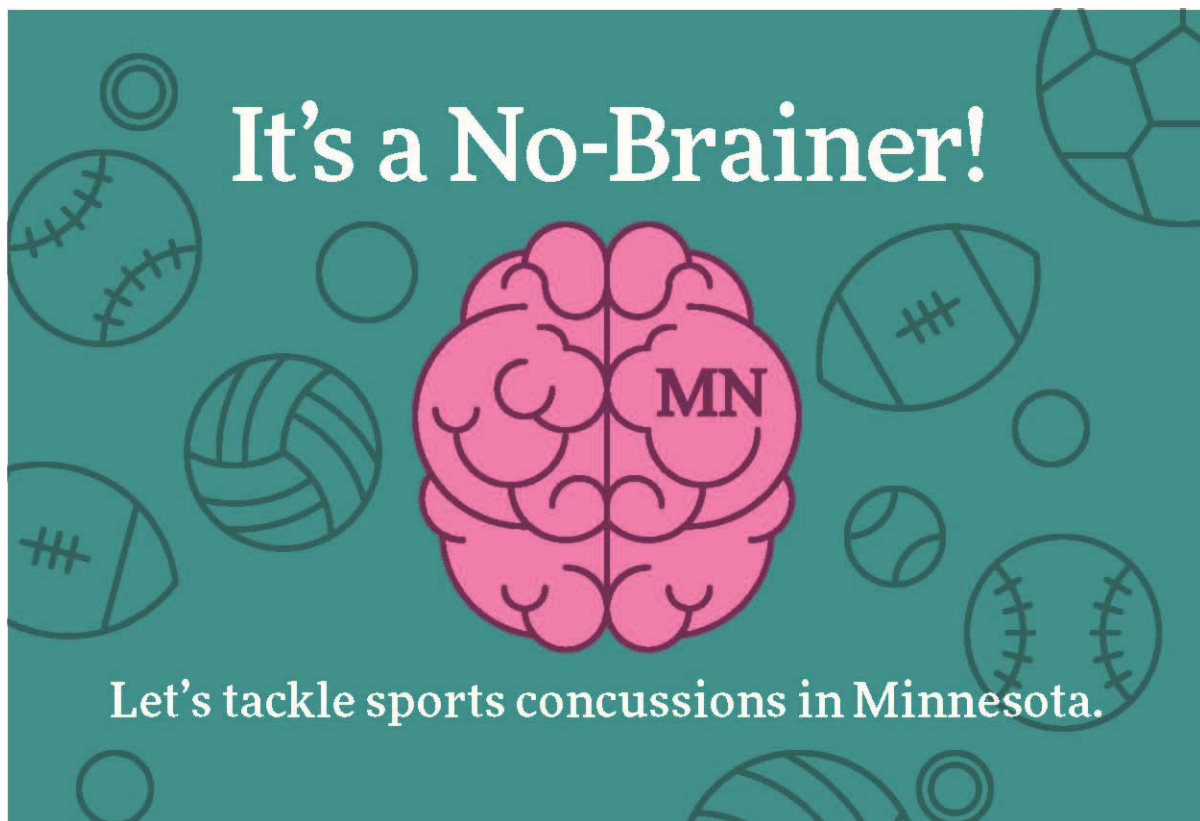


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# **HF 1714 (Hamilton): YOUTH SPORTS CONCUSSIONS**

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*Fact sheet on reverse side.*

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## HF1714 (Hamilton): YOUTH SPORTS CONCUSSIONS

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Benefits: Improved brain health for current and future Minnesota youth athletes.

Cost: One-time appropriation of \$450,000  
(\$150k for statewide study; \$300k for innovation grants)

Summary: In 2011 Minnesota enacted a youth sports concussions law. Minn. Stat. Ann. § 121A.37-38 (2011). Over five years later we know little about the implementation and effects of this law. The proposed bill will create a working group to study the effects of this law, and will also support pilot projects to foster innovation in concussion prevention, detection, and care. The working group report and pilot project results will foster development of a Minnesota Model for preventing, identifying, evaluating, and treating youth sports concussions. The study will create no new reporting requirements and no new administrative regulations.

- **Youth sports concussions remain a high priority health concern for Minnesota students and parents.** The Minnesota Department of Health conservatively estimates nearly 3,000 youth sports concussion incidents annually.<sup>1</sup> Parental and student concern remains high due to the incidence rate and significant media attention.
- **Minnesota risks falling behind.** When Minnesota passed its law in 2011 it was at the forefront of states in addressing youth sports concussions. Today, all 50 states have passed similar laws. Cutting-edge states are now *revisiting* those laws to see what works and what can be improved.<sup>2</sup>
- **We have limited statewide information on youth sports concussions.** It has been over five years since the 2011 bill was passed, but we still lack basic data on youth sports concussions and treatment. We need to learn how this regulation is working—and how it can work better.
- **A small investment now will pay large dividends.** Investing in this study now will facilitate additional grant proposals to the National Football League (headed to Minnesota for the Super Bowl in 2018) and the National Institutes of Health, amongst many other funders who wish to support innovative policies in this area.
- **Statewide benefits.** Youth sports concussions affect every county in the state, and a study that leads to improved responses to young athletes who experience concussion symptoms will produce tangible, statewide benefits. The bill requires a report with statewide coverage, and requires regional diversity in supporting the pilot programs.

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<sup>1</sup> Sarah Dugan, Leslie Seymour, Jon Roesler, Lori Glover & Mark Kinde, *This is Your Brain on Sports: Measuring Concussions in High School Athletes in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area*, Minnesota Medicine 43 (2014).

<sup>2</sup> The Network for Public Health Law, *Youth Sports Concussion Laws Resources* (2016).

## Testifiers for HF1714 (Hamilton): Youth Sports Concussions

*Tuesday, March 21, 2017*

*Health and Human Services Finance Committee*



**Dr. Francis Shen, JD, PhD** is an Associate Professor of Law at the University of Minnesota, where he studies the intersection of brain science, law, and policy. He is a principal investigator of a new UMN Grand Challenges project: *Toward a Minnesota Model for Brain Health in Youth Sports*. As a part of this interdisciplinary project, Dr. Shen is building a statewide collaboration around the issue of youth sports concussions. Dr. Shen received his B.A. from the University of Chicago, his J.D. from Harvard Law School, and his Ph.D. from Harvard University. He joined the UMN Law faculty in 2012, and in 2014 was the first Law School faculty member named as a McKnight Land-Grant Professor, the University's highest honor for junior faculty. He has authored numerous articles and co-authored three books, including the first Law and Neuroscience textbook. An avid sports fan and former NCAA D-III national championship qualifier in the 110 and 400 hurdles, Dr. Shen coaches the UMN Running Club sprinters, and also competes for the Twin Cities Track Club. He is the two-time defending champion in the USA Track and Field National Champion for his Masters age group in the 400m Hurdles.



**Kayla Meyer** is 21 years old and a junior at Minnesota State University Mankato. She suffered two separate sports concussions in hockey seven years ago that still cause daily symptoms, including a constant headache, fatigue, and sensitivity to noise. She has been an advocate on sports concussions by educating classes and helping to pass the Return to Play Bill in 2011. She testified before the legislature in 2011 on the youth sports concussion bill, and is pictured at left at the signing of the bill in 2011.



March 21, 2017

*To Chairman Dean and Members of the Health and Human Services Finance Committee:*

**This letter is submitted in support of H.F. No. 1714**, which would provide a one-time appropriation of \$450,000 to make Minnesota the national leader in preventing, detecting, and treating concussions in youth sports.

**Accountability.** In 2011, the legislature passed an innovative youth sports concussion bill. The 2011 law was an important step forward. But now we need accountability. More than five years later, we don't know how the concussion law is working—or how it might work better. The study would help us to better understand not only the incidence rate of concussion, but also variation by region, sport, age, and sex.

This bill would provide resources for a comprehensive study of how the law has been implemented. An all-star working group of experts and stakeholders will ensure that the study is rigorous, and will provide to the legislature a report with recommendations for how Minnesota can continue to embrace and encourage vigorous participation in sports, while also ensuring that all youth athletes have access to the best available scientific information and medical care.

**Innovation.** This bill is also about innovation. Since 2011, we've learned *a lot* about traumatic brain injury. Minnesota will fall behind if we don't revisit our policies in light of this new scientific insight.

The bill would provide innovation grants for schools and youth athletic organizations that wish to partner with cutting-edge researchers and clinicians in the state. Such innovations might include using novel sideline concussion testing technology, implementing new concussion protocols, or introducing new mobile health technology to track injury and recovery. The bill would require these innovation grants to be spread evenly across regions of the state.

**No new reporting requirements; no new regulations.** This bill creates no new regulations, and imposes no new reporting requirements. Moreover, the bill’s language explicitly calls for the study to identify legal and regulatory barriers to success in addressing youth sports concussions.

The study will be conducted in partnership with schools and youth organizations that voluntarily choose to participate. The funding will allow us to provide compensation to those voluntarily participating programs.

**Statewide scope.** The first (and only) study published by Minnesota Department of Health on the incidence of youth sports concussions in Minnesota included data from only 33 of the state’s 700+ schools, and all of those 33 schools were within the Twin Cities metro area. Moreover, we have no data on incidence rates in younger ages. This bill would allow for a study that reaches across the entire state, and touches upon grade school athletes as well.

**Strong grassroots support.** Our efforts to improve brain safety in youth sports are a grassroots effort. In conversations with student-athletes, parents, coaches, trainers, medical experts, and researchers, we have found widespread support. We have also taken the first step of creating a research collaboration, based at the University of Minnesota but now expanding to include partners in all regions. Legislative funding will provide the boost we need to make this a truly statewide effort.

**Minnesota is poised to be a national leader.** All states are concerned about brain injury in youth sports. But no state is better positioned to *do something* about it than Minnesota. Minnesota has brain injury experts and capacity for innovation in its healthcare providers, including Mayo, the University of Minnesota, CentraCare, Sanford Health, Hennepin County Medical Center, Essentia, and others. Our state has world-leading neuroscience research, and internationally renowned clinical expertise. The working group formed by this bill would give us the structure we need to bring those many resources together.

**The Time is Now.** It is more than five years since we passed the concussion law, and less than one year until the NFL brings the Super Bowl to Minnesota. The time is now to identify what we are doing well, where we need to improve, and how we can leverage the national spotlight of Super Bowl 2018 to promote a Minnesota Model of brain health in youth sports.

**In our view, it’s a no brainer. Let’s tackle sports concussions in Minnesota.**

*(Affiliations are provided below for identification purposes only.  
The signatories write as individuals, and not as representatives of their respective institutions.)*

*Signed:*

**Chad Greenway**

Professional Football Player, Minnesota Vikings;  
former NCAA D-1 football player at Univ. of Iowa;  
Founder, Lead the Way Foundation

**Dr. Francis Shen, JD, PhD**

Associate Professor of Law, University of Minnesota;  
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Brain Injury Medicine, Board Certified; Physical  
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