

January 6, 2012

To: All Pastors and Administrators Archdiocesan Executive Directors Catholic Youth Organization Directors Office of Youth Ministry Directors

From: Reverend Monsignor Stephen E. Martin, V.G.

Re: Mandatory Compliance with Alabama Concussion Law

On June 9, 2011 Governor Robert Bentley signed into law HB108, the State of Alabama Concussion Law. This law requires that the governing bodies of each sport or recreational organization develop guidelines and forms to educate coaches, youth athletes and their parents or guardians of the nature of concussions and brain injury. In response to this law, effective as of this date, January 6, 2012, the Archdiocese will require that the attached Archdiocesan Alabama Concussion Law Guidelines be implemented for each sport team within a parish, Catholic school, or archdiocesan ministry.

The language of this law states that the responsible party for ensuring this law is enforced falls to the “governing body of each sport or recreational organization”. For safety reasons and abidance by the laws of the State of Alabama, it is mandatory that each pastor and/or principal ensure that any athletic program advertised or endorsed in their parish or school is in compliance with the State of Alabama Concussion Law. If the governing body of the athletic program being advertised does not have guidelines to comply with this law, then it is mandatory that the Archdiocesan Alabama Concussion Law Guidelines be followed.

High schools teams who are members of the Alabama High School Athletic Association will follow the compliance guidelines set forth by the Alabama High School Athletic Association. It is the responsibility of each Catholic high school president and/or principal to ensure that their coaching staff is in compliance with the Alabama High School Athletic Association guidelines or the archdiocesan guidelines.

Parishes and Catholic elementary schools throughout the archdiocese endorse various athletic programs in their communities. Many of the parishes and schools in the Mobile and Baldwin/Escambia Deaneries participate in athletic programs sponsored by the Catholic Youth Organization (CYO). In this instance, CYO will be the “governing body” and therefore must

ensure that all CYO athletic events comply with the Archdiocesan Alabama Concussion Law Guidelines. Many parishes and schools also encourage students to participate in city-sponsored athletic programs. The “city” would then be the “governing body”. It is the responsibility of the pastor and/or principal to ensure that city-sponsored athletic programs advertised to their students are complying with guidelines mandated in this law. If the city program does not have guidelines established, then pastors or principals should default to enforcement of the Archdiocesan Alabama Concussion Law Guidelines. If the parish or school is the sponsor of an athletic program it is mandatory that compliance

with the Archdiocesan Alabama Concussion Law Guidelines be followed. Please note that these guidelines require training for all coaches, paid or volunteer, and all participants and their parents or guardians. Documentation must remain on file with the governing body for one year.

Parish or school advertised/endorsed athletic programs currently in the midst of their season must complete compliance with either Archdiocesan Alabama Concussion Law Guidelines or the guidelines of the governing body of the athletic program before February 10, 2012. Documentation must remain on file with the governing body for one year.

As soon as possible, all of the attached information, along with athlete and parent fact sheets and the Center for Disease Control online training course can be found on the Archdiocese of Mobile website, [www.mobilearchdiocese.org](http://www.mobilearchdiocese.org). Click on Forms and Documents to reach the Athletic Concussion Documents.

It is important that the parishes, schools and ministries of the Archdiocese of Mobile ensure compliance with the State of Alabama Concussion Law and ensure the safety, health, and well- being of our youth. Thank you for your attention to and compliance with these necessary guidelines.