

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 1, 2020



Contact: Communicate@chc.edu

215-242-7764

**Chestnut Hill College’s Concussion Center Publishes Two Articles in
Journal of Athletic Training**

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania – Two articles were recently published in the Journal of Athletic Training that examine the work of Chestnut Hill College’s Center for Concussion Education and Research, which develops, evaluates, and disseminates educational programs.

The first article, written by William Ernst, Psy.D., the executive director of the Center for Concussion Education and Research and an associate professor of psychology, and Meredith Kneavel, Ph.D., the director of research and assessment, focuses on the development of the Peer Concussion Education Program.

A second article, written by Kneavel, Ernst, and Kevin McCarthy, Ph.D., an associate professor of psychology, provides the findings of a national randomized control trial that investigated the results from 10 different universities that implemented the peer concussion education program.

Kneavel, Ernst, and McCarthy led the study and found, according to Ernst, that there was an “increase in knowledge, intention to report concussion in self and teammates, and positive attitudes around concussion safety and reporting.” These results provided important evidence supporting the effectiveness of the program.

“The goal is to change the culture of concussions and mainly to help athletes be more cognizant of the attitudes and any other barriers that might keep them from honestly and quickly reporting,” Ernst said of the concussion center, which was established at the college in 2015.

The center's mission is to educate and increase student-athlete and youth athlete safety, to provide high-quality research on the effectiveness of these programs, and to expand reporting.

Ernst said there are many reasons athletes do not report a concussion, from internal factors such as not wanting to lose playing time to a perceived pressure from the competitive culture of collegiate sports and a "suck it up" attitude.

"The change has to come from within," he added.

Ernst is referring to the concussion center's flagship program, the Peer Concussion Education Program. The program, first implemented at the college five years ago when two members of the men's lacrosse and women's soccer team became peer educators, spans 10 teams at the college, with each team having two peer educators. The program includes an online manual that provides a step-by-step guide to implementing the peer education program, and Ernst said the increased utility of the manual and related research may reveal future opportunities for concussion research and education, such as modifying the program so that it may be introduced to youth and high school athletes alike, which is currently being planned. Furthermore, a focus group is in the works to examine how international student-athletes and other governments outside the U.S. approach the topic of concussions.

Ernst, Kneavel, and McCarthy have presented research on the peer concussion education program at several national conferences alongside doctoral students at the college. They were invited to present their findings at the Concussion Education Research Summit at the NCAA in June 2019. Currently, Ernst is working with SUNY Albany's Science Research in the high school program with both a high school student and a doctoral student to examine how parents and coaches think about concussions. Partnering with other institutions, such as New York Univer-

sity's concussion center, is also on the horizon, a relationship that stands to present more opportunities to expand knowledge. Ultimately, all of these efforts are driving Ernst and his colleagues toward their uppermost goal, which is "widespread, broad dissemination of the program."

For more information:

Please email communicate@chc.edu or call 215-242-7764.

About Chestnut Hill College

Chestnut Hill College offers a four-year undergraduate curriculum that provides students with a broad background in the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences. New academic programs include cybersecurity, law and legal studies, and forensic sciences. The college also offers accelerated undergraduate degrees, master's degrees, and a doctoral program. Visit www.chc.edu.