



ThinkFirst Canada Welcomes Federal Government investment in Active and Safe Initiatives: Brain Injury Prevention in Team Sports in Canada

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ThinkFirst Pensez d'Abord Canada (TFC) is pleased to announce today their collaboration with The Canadian Centre for Ethics and Sport (CCES), Coaching Association of Canada (CAC), Hockey Canada on a national project aimed at reducing brain injuries in team sports in Canada as part of the federal government's Active and Safe Initiative.

"This partnership and the investments made by the federal government will enable us to reach to children and youth who are involved in sport, contributing to a safe and welcoming environment in which everyone can participate," said Rebecca Nesdale-Tucker, executive director and CEO, ThinkFirst-Pensez d'Abord Canada.

Traumatic brain injuries are among the most devastating of catastrophic injuries, with twice the death rate of injuries overall. A brain injury can permanently change the way a child or youth talks, walks, learns, works and interacts with others. This is why primary prevention and appropriate return to play is so important for team sports.

The Public Health Agency of Canada is investing 1.5 million dollars for the prevention of head injuries in team sport for young Canadians.

Sport is a valuable public asset in our communities. It can produce many benefits for those who participate and the communities that support them. This project aims to reduce the rate and severity of concussions and head injuries in child and youth team sports by reducing the incidence of head injury events and improving return to play decision making.

"Keeping Canada's children active and safe should be everyone's concern. Serious preventable injuries occur frequently in sports in Canada. Everyone has a role to play in preventing injury and helping children and youth have the healthiest possible start in life – particularly in reference to being active and safe" says Nesdale-Tucker.

Despite their ability to positively influence the health and well-being of Canadians, sports activities contribute to a significant number of injuries among children and youth, yet many of those injuries are predictable and preventable. With the support of the Public Health Agency of Canada, the project partners will work together to reduce injuries, particularly as it relates to brain injuries and concussions, while creating the conditions for active and safer play throughout the Canadian sport system. The project will produce an increased national awareness of head injury and concussion know-how, targeting coaches, trainers, educators, health professionals, community leaders, parents and athletes.

The project partners envision a country where all Canadian children and youth have access to safe team sport activities. It is expected that in collaboration with the Canadian Government and our community partners, we can accomplish much over the next few years by focusing our collective efforts.

Visit thinkfirst.ca before you play... for more information and to donate.

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ABOUT US

*Each project partner brings a unique network, reach, expertise, and set experiences to the initiative that will combine to effectively reach Canadians across a broad geographic scope and will provide opportunities to engage a host of individuals through active engagement opportunities and to train those who directly administer the sport experience to millions of children and youth across Canada. Overall, the project partners' combined efforts will contribute to **creating awareness, building capacity, engaging communities and their citizens as well as educating and training those who deliver sports** through activities that focus on brain injury and concussion prevention and treatment using a **common, united, consistent and reliable message**.*

ThinkFirst Pensez d'Abord Canada is a national non-profit organization dedicated to the prevention of brain and spinal cord injuries. ThinkFirst has been advocating for heightening public awareness through education since its inception in 1992. ThinkFirst has Chapters in every province across the country that spread the ThinkFirst injury prevention message. ThinkFirst teaches school-aged children and youth, sports teams, and community volunteers, to safely participate in the activities they enjoy.

ThinkFirst's message is promoted through advocacy for healthy policies, as well as participation in a number of coalitions that raise injury prevention awareness in communities across the country. ThinkFirst is committed to providing up-to-date research on the causes of injury and the effectiveness of injury prevention programs to ensure the information provided is both timely and relevant. Building on its extensive community- and medical- based networks; ThinkFirst will contribute to creating awareness as well as developing community capacity building resources that will educate children, youth, parents and medical practitioners about brain injury and concussion prevention and treatment.

ThinkFirst Canada Chapters can be found in cities representing every Canadian province:

- Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary, Saskatoon, Winnipeg, Hamilton, Kingston, London, Waterloo, Ottawa, Toronto, Montreal, Moncton, Fredericton, St John's, and Charlottetown.

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