High School Adaptive Sport Opportunities in the United States: A Website Document Analysis

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Introduction

- In the United States 4.3% of children and 26% of adults have a disability. For these individuals, physical activity participation is essential for staying healthy and reducing chronic disease.
- At the high school level, participation in Unified Sports and Para Sports continues to increase.
- To date there has not been research evaluating current opportunity for sports competition at the State Athletic Association level in the United States.

Objectives

- Determine opportunities for high school Adaptive Sport (Para Sport and Unified Sport) participation in each state in the United States.
- Identify presence of non-discriminatory statements and accommodation statements for athletes with disabilities in State High School Athletic Constitutions.

Methods

- A qualitative-website document analysis was performed.
- State High School Athletic Association websites were systematically browsed for relevant content using two approaches: reviewing the "Sports" tab and the "search box" on the web page utilizing a pre-selected list of words.
- If presence of an Adaptive Sport (Para Sport or Unified Sport) was identified, further details were collected about the sport.
- Additionally, each State High School Athletic Constitution was reviewed for non-discrimination statements and accommodation statements about students with disabilities.

Results

- Para Sport Opportunities
- Unified Sport Opportunities
- Para Sport Track Opportunities
- Unified Sport Track Opportunities

Summary

Based on website review of State High School Athletic Associations, 33% offer Para Sports and 41% offer Unified Sports.

With regards to State High School Athletic Association Constitutions and athletes with disabilities:
- 45% include a non-discrimination statement
- 35% include an accommodation statement

The implementation of statements in State High School Athletic Constitutions supporting non-discriminatory behavior and accommodations for athletes with disabilities is lacking. These statements are both a necessary and critical step to improve access to Adaptive Sports.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to both Dr. Yetsa Tuakli-Wosornu, MD, MPH and Amy Brown for their contributions to the development of this research project.

References


<=Scan QR Code for list of sports by state