



**Columbus Medical
Association**

Columbus Medical Association
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ColumbusMedicalAssociation.org

This letter is written in support of HB 492 to provide basic mental health awareness and training for Ohio high school coaches.

As physicians, we are all too aware of the many pre-existing challenges that have been exacerbated by the recent pandemic. Pediatric mental health is one of these challenges and we applaud the legislature's consideration of HB 492 as one of the potential responses to support the well-being of Ohio's children.

Coaches will commonly develop strong relationships with their players. They are uniquely positioned to be an early detector of mental health issues, if they have some basic awareness and understanding of what to look for. Coaches can make a difference.

We appreciate the many challenges for people's time in today's world, and coaches are no different. We support the intent of HB 492 that works to make this training as efficient as possible by giving the option for including the needed information in an existing curriculum for other coaching requirements.

It is our understanding that there are approximately 80,000 high school coaches in Ohio and that 70% of these coaches are not school employees. We cite this statistic because it would seem that HB 492 provides a way to fill a void in basic mental health/childhood development training that might not otherwise be available to the majority of coaches in our state.

The Columbus Medical Association's Public Policy Committee applauds the work of the sponsors and stakeholders who are behind HB 492 and urges the careful consideration and support of the Ohio House Primary and Secondary Education Committee.

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