

Matt,

I acknowledge receipt of Representative Smith's letter. I wanted to follow up and let you know that I have received this correspondence. Due to the KSA 12-105B Notice of Claim, the college is not at liberty to speak further on the matter. Recent correspondence has gone through the college attorney, Mr. Randy Grisell. At this time, Mr. Grisell is limited in the additional comments he can make, as the claim has been turned over to the college's liability insurance carrier to handle.

Thank you.

Ryan J. Ruda, Ed.D.
President
Garden City Community College
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CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH
4TH DISTRICT, New Jersey

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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

March 22, 2019

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DEAN, NEW JERSEY DELEGATION

President Ryan Ruda
Garden City Community College
801 Campus Dr.
Garden City, KS 67846

Dear President Ruda,

I am writing to request that Garden City Community College (GCCC) immediately commission a thorough and independent investigation into the tragic death of Braeden Bradforth, a former GCCC athlete and resident of my district who received a scholarship in July, 2018 to play football at the college.

Tragically, as you know, after football practice on the evening of August 1, 2018—his second day on campus—Braeden suffered from what an autopsy later revealed to be “exertional heat stroke”. Braeden was taken by ambulance to the hospital and was pronounced dead just hours later. Braeden’s mother, extended family and our community were shocked and saddened by the untimely death of this gifted 19 year-old.

To this day, Braeden’s family has many unanswered questions. We hope you agree that an independent investigation—which would include, at a minimum, a review of the health and safety practices of the athletic department and football program, eyewitness accounts and the response of GCCC leadership—is necessary and warranted.

Most regrettably, the Bradforth family’s tragedy is not the first of its kind, and an investigation would be critical to providing information the family is entitled to as well as information to help prevent such tragedies in the future. You may recall that in a similar case of the death of another college football player—due to heat stroke—the University of Maryland (UMD) hired a sports medicine consultant to look at the school’s protocols for maintaining student-athlete health and safety and whether they were appropriately implemented. The report can be found online at <https://www.usmd.edu/newsroom/Walters-Report-to-USM-Board-of-Regents.pdf>.

The UMD evaluation assembled a team of doctors, athletic trainers and strength and conditioning specialists, and spanned the course of three months. The team interviewed university athletic department officials, campus police and safety officers, athletic training staff, coaches and student-athletes, including officers, athletic staff and players present on the day of

Co-Chairman of the following Congressional Member Organizations: Task Force on Alzheimer’s Disease • Bi-Partisan Coalition for Combating Anti-Semitism
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Ad Hoc Congressional Committee for Irish Affairs • Congressional Caucus on Human Trafficking • Vietnam Caucus • Congressional Heart and Stroke Coalition

the medical emergency, and constructed a timeline of the day's events. It reviewed the health and safety standards of the football program and athletic department in the light of best medical practices, assessed the existing Emergency Action Plan (EAP), and examined documents relevant to the athlete's case including workout notes and the medical records of the deceased. Additionally, and specifically to Braeden's case, an investigation could determine if a Wet Bulb Globe Thermometer was in use and if an EAP was already in place.

The independent investigation, conducted in relation to the events at UMD, represents a prototype that might provide some answers to the Bradforth family and a sense of confidence for other student-athletes, and their parents, at GCCC. In fact, the University of Maryland investigation and subsequent report prompted changes in the university's practices, and the school has reportedly implemented almost all of its recommendations to date.

Accordingly, I urge you to authorize an outside investigation into the case of Braeden Bradforth, both as a means to respond to the many questions raised by Braeden's surviving family members and so that GCCC may take any proactive steps to ensure that the tragedy that happened the night of August 1 may never happen again.

Thank you for your immediate attention to this matter. I can be reached at 202-225-3765, and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Smith", written in a cursive style.

CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH
Member of Congress

CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

4th DISTRICT, NEW JERSEY

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DEAN, NEW JERSEY DELEGATION

April 4, 2019

Mr. Colin Lamb
Athletic Director
Garden City Community College
801 Campus Dr.
Garden City, KS 67846

Via Email: colin.lamb@gcccks.edu

Dear Mr. Lamb,

I am gravely disappointed that Garden City Community College (GCCC) has not demonstrated the most basic of courtesies normally extended to a grieving family.

Though 19-year-old Braeden Bradforth died tragically eight months ago on the campus of GCCC, the college president has yet to meet with Braeden's mother, Joanne. Nor has he—or any representative of the school—supplied the most basic answers about Braeden's final moments.

GCCC knows more about what happened to Braeden than they have shared. They launched an "internal review" purportedly to "provide additional factual information" about how Braeden died following football practice. And they issued a statement stating that the "review is intended to ensure that the college can transparently inform the community, the media—and most importantly—Braeden's family of the accurate facts and circumstances surrounding Braeden's death."

Their statement sounded promising. However, to this date, the GCCC administration has refused to share the results of the review with Braeden's family. Or me.

Why withhold information? It's unconscionable. Shameful. And no longer credible.

On March 22nd, I wrote to GCCC President Ryan Ruda asking him to immediately commission a thorough and independent investigation into Braeden's death from exertional heat stroke as determined by an autopsy. The response I received was a terse, five-sentence email basically saying that the college had no intention of responding. Not to me or Braeden's family.

A copy of my letter to GCCC President Ruda is attached. I believe the request is reasonable and based on precedent as the University of Maryland initiated a similar study immediately following the sad and shocking death of UMD athlete Jordan McNair.

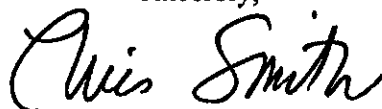
Braeden's family has many unanswered questions. We hope you agree that an independent investigation—which would include, at a minimum, a review of the health and safety practices of the athletic department and football program, eyewitness accounts and the response of GCCC leadership—is necessary and warranted.

Every grieving mother has the right to know how her healthy child with a promising future died on a college campus—especially when, in fact, the college leadership has gathered and reviewed the relevant information themselves.

As Joanne told me, no mother should have to cry the tears that she has cried since losing her son. It is imperative that representatives and government officials at every level work together in pursuit of *justice for Braeden*. We must “transparently inform the community” how and why Braeden died so that proactive steps can be taken to prevent harm to other athletes in the future.

I urge you, in your official capacity, to call for the establishment of an independent, outside investigation into Braeden Bradforth's tragic and untimely death.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Chris Smith".

CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH
Member of Congress

CHS:jss
encl.

CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

4th District, New Jersey

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DEAN, NEW JERSEY DELEGATION

April 4, 2019

Mr. Jeff Crist
Clerk of the Trustees
Garden City Community College
801 Campus Dr.
Garden City, KS 67846

Via Email: jeff.crist@gcccks.edu

Dear Mr. Crist,

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Though 19-year-old Braeden Bradforth died tragically eight months ago on the campus of GCCC, the college president has yet to meet with Braeden's mother, Joanne. Nor has he—or any representative of the school—supplied the most basic answers about Braeden's final moments.

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DEAN, NEW JERSEY DELEGATION

April 4, 2019

Ms. Terri Worf
Vice Chair
Board of Trustees
Garden City Community College
801 Campus Dr.
Garden City, KS 67846

Via Email: terri.worf@gcccks.edu

Dear Ms. Worf,

I am gravely disappointed that Garden City Community College (GCCC) has not demonstrated the most basic of courtesies normally extended to a grieving family.

Though 19-year-old Braeden Bradforth died tragically eight months ago on the campus of GCCC, the college president has yet to meet with Braeden's mother, Joanne. Nor has he—or any representative of the school—supplied the most basic answers about Braeden's final moments.

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4th District, New Jersey

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DEAN, NEW JERSEY DELEGATION

April 4, 2019

Dr. Blake Wasinger, Chair
Board of Trustees
Garden City Community College
801 Campus Dr.
Garden City, KS 67846

Via Email: blake.wasinger@gcccks.edu

Dear Mr. Wasinger,

I am gravely disappointed that Garden City Community College (GCCC) has not demonstrated the most basic of courtesies normally extended to a grieving family.

Though 19-year-old Braeden Bradforth died tragically eight months ago on the campus of GCCC, the college president has yet to meet with Braeden's mother, Joanne. Nor has he—or any representative of the school—supplied the most basic answers about Braeden's final moments.

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DEAN, NEW JERSEY DELEGATION

April 4, 2019

Mr. Steve Martinez
Trustee
Garden City Community College
801 Campus Dr.
Garden City, KS 67846

Via Email: steve.martinez@gccccks.edu

Dear Mr. Martinez,

I am gravely disappointed that Garden City Community College (GCCC) has not demonstrated the most basic of courtesies normally extended to a grieving family.

Though 19-year-old Braeden Bradforth died tragically eight months ago on the campus of GCCC, the college president has yet to meet with Braeden's mother, Joanne. Nor has he—or any representative of the school—supplied the most basic answers about Braeden's final moments.

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DEAN, NEW JERSEY DELEGATION

April 4, 2019

Mr. Leonard Hitz
Trustee
Garden City Community College
801 Campus Dr.
Garden City, KS 67846

Via Email: leonard.hitz@gccccks.edu

Dear Mr. Hitz,

I am gravely disappointed that Garden City Community College (GCCC) has not demonstrated the most basic of courtesies normally extended to a grieving family.

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4TH DISTRICT, NEW JERSEY

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DEAN, NEW JERSEY DELEGATION

April 4, 2019

Ms. Merylyn Douglass
Trustee
Garden City Community College
801 Campus Dr.
Garden City, KS 67846

Via Email: merilyn.douglass@gccccks.edu

Dear Ms. Douglass,

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DEAN, NEW JERSEY DELEGATION

April 4, 2019

The Honorable Dan Frankhauser
Mayor
Garden City
301 N. 8th Street
Garden City, KS 67846

Via email: defankhauser@gmail.com

Dear Mayor Frankhauser,

I am gravely disappointed that Garden City Community College (GCCC) has not demonstrated the most basic of courtesies normally extended to a grieving family.

Though 19-year-old Braeden Bradforth died tragically eight months ago on the campus of GCCC, the college president has yet to meet with Braeden's mother, Joanne. Nor has he—or any representative of the school—supplied the most basic answers about Braeden's final moments.

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April 4, 2019

The Honorable Troy Unruh
Commissioner
Garden City
301 N. 8th Street
Garden City, KS 67846

Via email: Troy.unruh@gardencityks.us

Dear Commissioner Unruh,

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CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

4th District, New Jersey

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COMMISSION ON CHINA

DEAN, NEW JERSEY DELEGATION

April 4, 2019

The Honorable Shannon L. Dick
Commissioner
Garden City
301 N. 8th Street
Garden City, KS 67846

Via email: Shannon.dick@gardencityks.us

Dear Commissioner Dick,

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DEAN, NEW JERSEY DELEGATION

April 4, 2019

The Honorable Roy Cessna
Commissioner
Garden City
301 N. 8th Street
Garden City, KS 67846

Via email: rcessna@gckschools.com

Dear Commissioner Cessna,

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DEAN, NEW JERSEY DELEGATION

April 4, 2019

The Honorable Lindsay J. Byrnes
Commissioner
Garden City
301 N. 8th Street
Garden City, KS 67846

Via email: Lindsay.barnes@gardencityks.us

Dear Commissioner Byrnes,

I am gravely disappointed that Garden City Community College (GCCC) has not demonstrated the most basic of courtesies normally extended to a grieving family.

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DEAN, NEW JERSEY DELEGATION

April 4, 2019

Mr. Blake Flanders
President and CEO
Kansas Board of Regents
1000 SW Jackson Street, Suite 520
Topeka, KS 66612-1368

Via email: scholars@ksbor.org

Dear Mr. Flanders,

I am gravely disappointed that Garden City Community College (GCCC) has not demonstrated the most basic of courtesies normally extended to a grieving family.

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DEAN, NEW JERSEY DELEGATION

April 4, 2019

Mr. Dennis A. Mullen
Chair
Kansas Board of Regents
1000 SW Jackson Street, Suite 520
Topeka, KS 66612-1368

Via email: scholars@ksbor.org

Dear Mr. Mullen,

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DEAN, NEW JERSEY DELEGATION

April 4, 2019

Mr. Shane Bangerter
Vice-Chair
Kansas Board of Regents
1000 SW Jackson Street, Suite 520
Topeka, KS 66612-1368

Via email: scholars@ksbor.org

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DEAN, NEW JERSEY DELEGATION

April 4, 2019

Ms. Linda Fund
Executive Director
Kansas Association of Community Colleges
700 SW Jackson
Ste. 1000
Topeka, KS 66603

Via email: lfund@kacct.org

Dear Ms. Fund,

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DEAN, NEW JERSEY DELEGATION

April 4, 2019

Mr. Chris Parker
Executive Director
National Junior College Athletic Association
8801 JM Keynes Drive Suite 450
Charlotte, NC 28262

Via email: cparker@njcaa.org

Dear Mr. Parker,

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DEAN, NEW JERSEY DELEGATION

April 4, 2019

Mr. Joe Osovet
Football Coaches Association
National Junior College Athletic Association
8801 JM Keynes Drive Suite 450
Charlotte, NC 28262

Via email: coachosovet@asa.edu

Dear Mr. Osovet,

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April 4, 2019

Mr. Joe Forchtner
Football Coaches Association
National Junior College Athletic Association
8801 JM Keynes Drive Suite 450
Charlotte, NC 28262

Via email: jamesf@nmmi.edu

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DEAN, NEW JERSEY DELEGATION

April 4, 2019

Rion Rhoades
Football Coaches Association
National Junior College Athletic Association
8801 JM Keynes Drive Suite 450
Charlotte, NC 28262

Via email: rhoadesr@hutchcc.edu

Dear Mr. Rhoades,

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CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

4th District, New Jersey

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COMMISSION ON CHINA

DEAN, NEW JERSEY DELEGATION

April 4, 2019

Mr. Scott Strohmeier
Football Coaches Association
National Junior College Athletic Association
8801 JM Keynes Drive Suite 450
Charlotte, NC 28262

Via email: sstrohmeier@iwcc.edu

Dear Mr. Strohmeier,

I am gravely disappointed that Garden City Community College (GCCC) has not demonstrated the most basic of courtesies normally extended to a grieving family.

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April 4, 2019

Loreto Jackson
Athletic Trainers, Safety, & Health Council Committee Member
National Junior College Athletic Association
8801 JM Keynes Drive Suite 450
Charlotte, NC 28262

Via email: lmjackso@bhcc.mass.edu

Dear Mr. Jackson,

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DEAN, NEW JERSEY DELEGATION

April 4, 2019

Mr. George Sanders
Athletic Trainers, Safety, & Health Council Committee Member
National Junior College Athletic Association
8801 JM Keynes Drive Suite 450
Charlotte, NC 28262

Via email: gsanders@fsw.edu

Dear Mr. Sanders,

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DEAN, NEW JERSEY DELEGATION

April 4, 2019

Ms. Donna Sledge
Athletic Trainers, Safety, & Health Council Committee Member
National Junior College Athletic Association
8801 JM Keynes Drive Suite 450
Charlotte, NC 28262

Via email: dsledge@abac.edu

Dear Ms. Sledge,

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DEAN, NEW JERSEY DELEGATION

April 4, 2019

Mr. Kyle Roepnack
Athletic Trainers, Safety, & Health Council Committee Member
National Junior College Athletic Association
8801 JM Keynes Drive Suite 450
Charlotte, NC 28262

Via email: kyle.roepnack@herkimer.edu

Dear Mr. Roepnack,

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April 4, 2019

Kerri Reeves

Athletic Trainers, Safety, & Health Council Committee Member
National Junior College Athletic Association
8801 JM Keynes Drive Suite 450
Charlotte, NC 28262

Via Email: kreeves@marionmilitary.edu

Dear M. Reeves,

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DEAN, NEW JERSEY DELEGATION

April 4, 2019

Chris Murphy
Athletic Trainers, Safety, & Health Council Committee Member
National Junior College Athletic Association
8801 JM Keynes Drive Suite 450
Charlotte, NC 28262

Via email: camurphy@pima.edu

Dear M. Murphy,

I am gravely disappointed that Garden City Community College (GCCC) has not demonstrated the most basic of courtesies normally extended to a grieving family.

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DEAN, NEW JERSEY DELEGATION

April 4, 2019

Mr. Nate Kelley
Athletic Trainers, Safety, & Health Council Committee Member
National Junior College Athletic Association
8801 JM Keynes Drive Suite 450
Charlotte, NC 28262

Via email: nate.kelley@njc.edu

Dear Mr. Kelley,

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DEAN, NEW JERSEY DELEGATION

April 4, 2019

Mr. Jeff Fluty
Athletic Trainers, Safety, & Health Council Committee Member
National Junior College Athletic Association
8801 JM Keynes Drive Suite 450
Charlotte, NC 28262

Via email: fluty@cowley.edu

Dear Mr. Fluty,

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DEAN, NEW JERSEY DELEGATION

April 4, 2019

Mr. Mike Saddler
Men's Region 6 Director
National Junior College Athletic Association
8801 JM Keynes Drive Suite 450
Charlotte, NC 28262

Via Email: mike.saddler@colbycc.edu

Dear Mr. Saddler,

I am gravely disappointed that Garden City Community College (GCCC) has not demonstrated the most basic of courtesies normally extended to a grieving family.

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DEAN, NEW JERSEY DELEGATION

April 4, 2019

The Honorable Laura Kelly
Governor
State of Kansas
Office of the Governor
300 SW 10th Ave., Ste. 241S
Topeka, KS 66612-1590

Dear Governor Kelly,

I am gravely disappointed that Garden City Community College (GCCC) has not demonstrated the most basic of courtesies normally extended to a grieving family.

Though 19-year-old Braeden Bradforth died tragically eight months ago on the campus of GCCC, the college president has yet to meet with Braeden's mother, Joanne. Nor has he—or any representative of the school—supplied the most basic answers about Braeden's final moments.

GCCC knows more about what happened to Braeden than they have shared. They launched an "internal review" purportedly to "provide additional factual information" about how Braeden died following football practice. And they issued a statement stating that the "review is intended to ensure that the college can transparently inform the community, the media—and most importantly—Braeden's family of the accurate facts and circumstances surrounding Braeden's death."

Their statement sounded promising. However, to this date, the GCCC administration has refused to share the results of the review with Braeden's family. Or me.

Why withhold information? It's unconscionable. Shameful. And no longer credible.

On March 22nd, I wrote to GCCC President Ryan Ruda asking him to immediately commission a thorough and independent investigation into Braeden's death from exertional heat stroke as determined by an autopsy. The response I received was a terse, five-sentence email basically saying that the college had no intention of responding. Not to me or Braeden's family.

Recommendations

1. A coverage model should be developed to communicate global departmental understanding of roles and responsibilities of all appropriate personnel relative to the EAP.
2. Organizational charts, job descriptions, and mission statements should reflect roles and expectations for deliverable healthcare services to student-athletes in a model allowing healthcare providers to work in a functional, independent care setting.
3. A venue specific EAP should be developed, practiced, and posted for all sites. Need formalized documentation of training sessions of all staff regarding EAP, the frequency of training including the extent of content.
4. EAPs should be adjusted daily in light of construction. The Office of Facilities communicates with staff regarding impact of construction on facility access.
5. The EAP should be distributed to certified athletic trainers, team physicians, athletic training students, athletic administrators, coaches, institutional safety personnel, and legal counsel. All educational sessions should be documented and repeated according to need, at a minimum of annually. The EAP should be practiced by healthcare team (certified athletic trainers and physicians) at each venue on a quarterly basis, or more often if indicated. All training should be documented.
6. The Gosset Team House EAP appears to be an addendum that is utilized if EMS is to be called. There needs to be a clearly defined EAP for Gosset to include information for emergencies that occur on the first and second floor.
7. A venue specific lightning monitoring plan needs to be established for all outdoor venues.

8. The WBGT (wet bulb globe thermometer) index needs to be implemented for all outdoor venues. Appropriate protocols need to be established for all outdoor venues.
9. Washington Adventist Hospital needs to be added as a potential receiving facility for an injured student-athlete.
10. Cold water immersion devices need to be available for all training, conditioning, or practice activities. Policies and procedures for cooling patients before transport to the hospital must be explicitly stated in an EAP and shared with potential EMS responders so that treatment of EHS by all medical professionals is coordinated .
11. Establish a trauma bag for each practice and game site as part of the EAP. The contents should include thermistors for assessment of core temperature.
12. Develop a plan for assessment of student-athlete with exertional heat illness symptoms including but not limited to core temperature assessment and rapid cooling with cold water immersion.
13. A medical timeout should be initiated prior to every practice and event by the athletic training and physicians.
14. AED locations should be established to guarantee a three-minute response time at all venues.
15. Establish an Athletic Medicine Review Board from a variety of specialties (cardiology, orthopaedic surgery, neurosurgery, psychiatry, emergency medicine, athletic training, physical therapy, strength and conditioning, nutrition, etc.) to provide oversight of sports medicine, strength and conditioning, nutrition etc. This allows oversight for all student-athlete health and welfare issues from a medical perspective.

16. Personnel performing specific gravity screening should be trained consistent with professional standards.
17. There was a lack of timely documentation in the case by those that provided care. Appropriate timely documentation of the event should occur as well as administration of the Crisis Incident Plan.
18. Sufficient time must be allowed for change in practice venue. Practice cannot be conducted until minimal medical equipment is setup by the athletic training staff.
19. Establish a functional model for supervising, education, and staffing certified athletic trainers and physical therapists to allow provision of appropriate medical care in a best practice model. The current model is an athletic model with medical direction. All aspects of this model need to be formalized with consistent directives between job descriptions, understanding of all parties, and organizational charts. These concepts should be integrated for all positions related to student-athlete health and welfare including but not limited to nutrition, strength and conditioning, athletic training, and psychology.
20. Establish a standard procedure for the annual education of student-athletes utilizing any stimulant medication or related medication with potential impact on heat tolerance or other indications for exercise tolerance. This should be appropriately documented in the medical file.

The Head Football Athletic Trainer recommended (post-event) the following items for consideration:

21. All staff to use radios during all practice and conditioning sessions to improve communication.

22. Cold tubs should be prepped regardless of environmental conditions or workout intensity.
23. Hydration testing prior to all team runs .
24. Split groups into smaller groups for team runs.
25. Athlete that does not make their time for their repetition must sit out subsequent repetition.
Utilize 1/2 gasser runs (running the width of the field) as this activity emphasizes touching the line and more healthcare team are allowed on return/recovery.
26. Increase communication on timing with change of venue for workout.
27. Physician onsite for conditions tests and/or first day of return from break.

Discussion

The charge from The University of Maryland's Office of General Counsel and Department of Intercollegiate Athletics directed was as follows:

- a) perform an independent evaluation of ICA's procedures and protocols related to the recent death of a University football player as detailed more specifically in the "Scope of Services".
- b) review the football program's procedures and protocols involving student-athlete health and safety applicable to:
 - (1) planning and conducting team conditioning and practice sessions and
 - (2) for responding to health emergencies during or after those sessions.

Based upon the charge, we have conducted over 50 interviews, reviewed 70-plus documents, and engaged in exhaustive hours of research related to the incident of May 29, 2018.

There has also been a review of current procedures utilized within the Athletic Training program at the University of Maryland.