



Press Release

For Immediate Release

May 7, 2007

Contact:

Michael Meisner

508-475-0032

mmeisner@biama.org

Summer Safety Begins With a Helmet

As you break out the sports equipment and start enjoying the warmer weather, the Brain Injury Association of Massachusetts (BIA-MA) urges you to dust off the helmet as well. If you engage in an activity where there's a risk of head injury, wearing a helmet is always a good idea.

"Bike-related crashes kill about 800 people every year and send more than 500,000 to hospital emergency rooms with injuries," said Arlene Korab, Executive Director of BIA-MA. "Helmets can prevent many head injuries associated with biking as well as baseball, skateboarding, and rollerblading," she said.

According to the Centers for Disease Control (2006), use of helmets reduces the risk of bicycle-related head injury by as much as 84 percent. Sadly, youngsters under 15 account for about half of bicycling deaths – the majority a result of traumatic brain injury (TBI).

"When wearing a helmet, make sure it is worn correctly – down in front," advises Korab. "Prevention begins with parents, who should serve as role models for their children by wearing a helmet themselves."

The Brain Injury Association of Massachusetts (BIA-MA) is a private, non-profit organization that provides support services to brain injury survivors and their families, offers programs to prevent brain injuries, and educates the public on the risks of acquiring brain injury and its impact. The association advocates for funding for support services and for legislation to prevent brain injuries, including seatbelt and helmet laws.

Each fall, BIA-MA holds a sports concussion conference designed to educate coaches, trainers, EMTs, nurses, and athletes on how to recognize and better manage sports concussion.

###

Fact Sheet on Helmet Safety

- Head injuries suffered as a result of not wearing a helmet cause three-quarters of the 900 bicycle deaths each year (*National Highway Transportation Safety Association, 2006*).
- Half of all bicycle deaths are children under 15 years old. (*Bicycle Helmet Safety Institute, 2006*)
- Use of bicycle helmets reduces the risk for bicycle-related head injury by 74%-85% (*Center for Disease Control, 2006*).
- 1 in 8 of the cyclists with reported injuries has a brain injury (*Bicycle Helmet Safety Institute, 2006*).
- Direct costs of cyclists' injuries due to not using helmets are estimated at \$81 million each year (*Bicycle Helmet Safety Institute, 2006*).
- Powered vehicles (ATVs, go-carts, dirt bikes) are the second most common cause of head injuries during the spring and summer months. (*U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission*).
- Each year in the U.S., skateboarding injuries cause about 50,000 visits to emergency departments and 1500 children and adolescents to be hospitalized. Most hospitalizations involve head injury (AAP, March 2002).



A properly fitted helmet.