At age 16, Brittany Miller is already quite the accomplished athlete. The Perham High School sophomore keeps busy with volleyball, softball, and basketball practice throughout the year.

Unfortunately, this young athlete has already suffered from five concussions. Her most recent concussion occurred during a softball game this past April. “I was sliding into second base when a girl knocked my helmet off and her cleat hit me in the head,” Miller recalls. She kept on playing for the rest of the game, gradually noticing she didn’t feel very well. A few days later, Miller went to Perham Health where she was evaluated for a neck injury and possible concussion. Based on the evaluation findings, Vince Pankonin, D.C., administered an IMPACT test to further evaluate the extent of Miller’s injury. The IMPACT test is a computer-based test measuring a person’s memory, reaction time, and ability to process information. Miller had previously taken a baseline IMPACT test during the school year providing Dr. Pankonin with comparable data to determine the extent of Miller’s concussion symptoms.

“The test establishes a patient’s baseline neuro/cognitive function,” Dr. Pankonin explains. “If a person has a head injury in the future, we have a baseline of their function to compare to. We are able to determine the extent of the injury because we have objective data. From this we are able to return them to play when it’s safe to do so.”

As a part of the partnership developed between Perham Health and the Perham and New York Mills schools to provide sports medicine services, IMPACT testing is available to all student athletes. Perham Health staff members administer the test in high school computer labs.

IMPACT is a challenging test. In Miller’s case, her test scores were significantly lower after her injury than her baseline score. “I had to take it four or five times over a period of three weeks until my score and evaluation determined I was ready to return to play,” Miller says.

“The greatest fear is to return an athlete to a sport too soon after a concussion,” comments Perham Athletic Director Fred Sailer. “With this baseline we know when it’s safe for a student to return after an injury.” In Miller’s case, she was eventually able to return to sports but now wears a concussion headband to give her extra protection.

Dr. Pankonin also provided chiropractic treatment to help Miller with other injuries and gave her exercises she can do to help with her balance. “He is really easy to talk to and makes me feel comfortable around him. It made it easy to do the test with him,” Miller says of her experience.

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Perham Health’s partnership with the school not only helped serve Miller, but many other young athletes just like her. The Perham Health sports medicine team includes chiropractic, physical therapy, occupational therapy, and speech therapy professionals. The high schools in both Perham and New York Mills have a member of this team visit the schools on a weekly basis to meet with student athletes and provide advice about injuries they’ve sustained. Common injuries include sprains, broken bones, and the occasional concussion.

Perham Health’s sports medicine team also plays a significant role at school games and tournaments, with professionals stationed on-site at sporting events with a higher element of risk. “Having the sports medicine team available is very comforting for the athletes, parents, and the coaches. Even for minor injuries, having a professional on hand to evaluate the injury brings peace of mind,” Sailer says.

“They are an excellent resource for our school to have and call on,” agrees New York Mills Athletic Director Matt Radniecki. “They provide a safety net for us, but also quick and professional advice on what to do for an injured athlete.”

Dr. Pankonin describes this relationship as a service opportunity for the hospital to work with the local schools, athletes, and their families. Rehabilitation services help athletes get back to their sports quicker.

Although actual treatment is not done in the schools, athletes’ injuries are evaluated on-site. The condition is typically something as simple as a pulled muscle or another minor injury. If the problem is more serious, the athlete is referred to a medical professional. Evaluating the students at the school helps to limit the amount of time students are out of the classroom.

Sophomore Nick Kupfer is one of many students who opted to utilize this service at New York Mills High School. Kupfer sustained several sports-related injuries from baseball, including a fractured hip and knee and shoulder injuries.

Robb Reed, D.C., has treated Kupfer for over a year now. “I had an ultrasound done on my knee,” Kupfer says. “Dr. Reed also uses heat treatments and adjusts my shoulder.”

“Two to three weeks would be the average amount of time we would work with an athlete from the acute phase back to pain-free activity,” Dr. Reed explains. Severe injuries may necessitate the involvement of a student’s physician or an orthopedic surgeon.

In Kupfer’s case, his hip injury did require surgery. He now makes regular visits to see Dr. Reed for follow-up care at Perham Health’s New York Mills Clinic.

Perham Health’s sports medicine team works diligently to provide immediate, on-site care for student athletes. “It’s an outstanding opportunity for us to work hand-in-hand with Perham Health,” Sailer summarizes. “There is some injury that is possible in any type of sport. We understand that risk, but also understand that kids need to have quick, competent medical help.”
New electronic medical record emphasis on patient safety and patient-centered care

Perham Health will soon be going live with a new electronic medical record system. One Chart will effectively integrate the clinic and hospital records, providing numerous benefits for patients, providers, and staff members.

Partnering with Sanford, One Chart is Perham Health’s branding of an electronic medical record called EPIC. EPIC is recognized for maintaining the largest national platform in the industry.

The core team members who are working to bring One Chart to Perham are LaDonna Tellinghuisen, Beth Ulschmid, Jim Rieber, and Bonnie Johnson. Tellinghuisen says One Chart impressed the team with its emphasis on patient safety and patient-centered care. “It’s really the best electronic medical record product out there,” she says.

Tellinghuisen and her fellow team members have spent over a year researching One Chart and evaluating the optimal way to transition to the new system. Nearly every Perham Health employee underwent hours of training to learn about One Chart and how to make the transition as seamless as possible. Sanford will provide both on-site and remote support to aid Perham Health during the transition in early 2013.

Tellinghuisen mentions how, “From a system standpoint, there will be certain capabilities that will be enhanced from what we have now.” For example, One Chart will provide a wider range of patient education information.

One of the great advantages, especially for patient safety, is how One Chart will connect different areas of Perham Health. Under the current system, the clinic, hospital, and therapy teams are using three different clinical and financial products. One Chart will integrate these separate systems into one. This will also help to streamline the billing process.

By partnering with Sanford, patients who visit Sanford locations will have their medical information instantly available. “Anywhere they go within the Perham or Sanford system, their information will flow seamlessly,” explains Rieber.

The ability to access patient medical information extends beyond Sanford to include nationwide access to all health systems using EPIC. This is a tremendous benefit for Perham Health’s patients whose base medical record is not located in Perham and for Perham Health patients who are being treated at another location.

EPIC will give patients the option to access their medical information online through a program called My Chart. This online resource will detail much of the same information a patient’s provider sees. Immunization records will be available online so patients can log in and view their personal history.

Lab results will also be displayed on My Chart for patients who choose to enroll in the online service. Patients have the option to add their own outside medical records and then store them online. Appointments can even be scheduled through the secure My Chart site.

Dr. Andrea Westby, who recently joined the Perham Health team, came to Perham with previous experience working with an EPIC electronic medical record system. Dr. Westby’s knowledge of the system is becoming a common trend as more medical professionals are being exposed to EPIC through training, clinical rotations, and residency.

“One of the nicest things about it is the decreased amount of clicking,” Dr. Westby comments. “The workflow seems to be smoother and more intuitive as far as figuring out what the providers and nursing staff need to do.” One Chart is customizable, giving physicians the opportunity to select their personal preferences.

Dr. Westby says she found EPIC to reduce duplicate work with a patient’s medical history, eliminate delays in waiting for a patient’s results, decrease duplicate lab tests, and increase provider communication.

Perham Health is looking forward to the many benefits One Chart will offer patients and members of the medical team. One Chart is an investment in furthering the patient- and family-centered care model provided by Perham Health.

Wellspring 3
Join us for Just For Women, a health event focused on women’s health. Experts on a variety of topics will provide education, screenings, and information geared to women’s unique health needs. A medical panel of Perham Health physicians will answer questions. Culminating the evening will be presenter and motivational speaker, Deadra Stanton, whose humorous style and real-life experiences will have you belly laughing with her presentation. Door prizes and more.

Education Booths
Medical Panel
Light Meal
Keynote Speaker - Deadra Stanton
Door Prizes

To learn more or to register, please call 218-347-1303 or email tracy.hendrickx@perhamhealth.org

FREE ADMISSION