

The Ask

Expand Rowan's Law Across Canada

We believe **every young Canadian deserves the opportunity to play sports safely**—free from the devastating impacts of concussions and other forms of traumatic brain injuries.



CLFC is ready to work alongside you to bring **Rowan's Law to each province and territory**—strengthening concussion safety and awareness across the country

About Rowan Stringer



Rowan Stringer was a **17-year-old high school rugby player from Ottawa who tragically passed away in 2013** after suffering three head injuries in six days. She died from **second impact syndrome**, a catastrophic swelling of the brain caused by a second concussion before the first had healed.

In 2015, a Coroner's Inquest made **21 recommendations to prevent similar deaths**. Rowan's story moved Ontario to act—and her legacy is saving lives through Rowan's Law.

What Ontario Has Done

In 2018, Ontario passed Rowan's Law (Concussion Safety) to increase awareness, minimize risks, and change the conversation around brain injuries. The law applies to competitive amateur sport organizations across 65 sports and to athletes 25 years of age or younger at the time of registration.

The legislation includes:

- **Annual concussion awareness training** for athletes, parents/guardians of athletes under 18, coaches, trainers, and officials.
- **Concussion codes of conduct**, signed and reviewed before participation, outlining rules to minimize concussion risks.
- **Mandatory removal-from-sport and return-to-sport protocols**, ensuring athletes suspected of having a concussion are removed immediately and cleared by a physician or nurse practitioner before returning.

Ontario's Ministry of Sport has heard from athletes, parents, coaches, medical professionals, and others that Rowan's Law has made sport safer. Feedback from the sport sector has been positive. Ontario marked the sixth annual Rowan's Law Day in 2024 and will mark the seventh on **September 25, 2025**.

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A recent study by **Dr. Jesse Young at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health—CAMH—**suggests Rowan's Law may be having a real effect: early data shows potential reductions in concussions in Ontario. While the data is early, it's promising. We're seeing higher awareness, better protocols, and stronger safeguards. It's a trend worth following.

Preliminary findings also suggest a potential drop in sports-related brain injuries in 2018 and 2019 — a decline that may coincide with the passage of **Rowan's Law**, Ontario's landmark concussion safety legislation. While more research is needed to confirm a causal relationship, the data points to the possible effectiveness of policy in reducing injury incidence.

This study reinforces why Rowan's Law was a necessary step in concussion prevention. We are encouraged by the potential signs of impact and remain committed to policies that protect the health and safety of all Ontarians, especially young athletes.

The latest data shows that approximately **37% of brain injuries reported between 2010 and 2019 in Ontario hospitals were related to sports and recreational activities**, tripling previous estimates of just 12%. This sharp increase underscores an urgent need to re-evaluate the public health burden of sports-related brain injuries, which were previously estimated to cost Ontario over **\$113 million annually**.

Why Expand Rowan's Law Nationally? Why Now?

We know that Canadians care deeply about the health and safety of young athletes. As former athletes, coaches, and parents, we know how sport shapes lives— but it **must never come at the cost of safety**. As we approach Rowan's Law Day this fall, we want to see provinces and territories take up the challenge to become a national leader in concussion safety by adopting your own Rowan's Law.

Together, let's protect the brain health of Canadian children and youth through brain-smart, safe sports. **We want to work with you to bring Rowan's Law to all provinces and territories**, introducing legislation that will protect future generations with a safer way to play sports.

About CLFC

The **Concussion Legacy Foundation Canada (CLFC)** is dedicated to solving the brain injury crisis through education, policy, and medical research. We focus on prevention, treatment, and awareness of brain trauma and associated mental health outcomes in athletes, youth, military personnel, and other at-risk groups. We have reached over 70,000 Canadians in person and millions more online through awareness events and campaigns.

Learn More

Go to ConcussionFoundation.org or scan QR code

