NCAA Independent Medical Care at Kalamazoo College

What is Independent Medical Care and why is it important?

Independent medical care involves primary athletics health care providers, defined as the team physician and athletic trainer, to make medical decisions for student-athletes free of pressure or influence from non-medical factors. This approach allows team physicians and athletic trainers in the collegiate setting to have the final decision-making authority with regard to the diagnosis, management and return-to-play determinations for student-athlete care without influence by non-medical professionals, such as a coach, parent, or director of athletics. The primary athletics health care providers should ultimately be empowered to make final decision-making to both ensure appropriate medical controls and to avoid confusion.

Where does Kalamazoo College stand with Independent Medical Care?

Kalamazoo College has implemented an administrative structure that ensures the “unchallengeable autonomous authority” of primary athletics health care providers (defined as the team physicians and athletic trainers) within the institution to determine medical management and return-to-play decisions of student-athletes at Kalamazoo College. The Kalamazoo College Team Physician has the absolute final determination in regards to return to play for every Kalamazoo College student-athlete. Any results, medical documentation, and/or clearance from additional medical professionals outside of Kalamazoo College will be presented to the Kalamazoo College Team Physician but will not be the final determination on return to play. The Kalamazoo College Team Physician will make all final decisions regarding return to play for any illness/injury.

What are the benefits of Independent Medical Care for college student-athletes?

1. The physical and psychosocial welfare of the individual student-athlete will always be the highest priority of the athletic trainer and the team physician.

2. The sports medicine physicians and athletic trainers will always practice in a manner that integrates the best current research evidence.

3. The foundational approach for independent medical care is to assume an “athlete-centered care” approach, which refers to the delivery of health care services that are focused only on the individual patient’s needs and concerns.