



## *Press Release*

**For Immediate Release**  
January 24, 2012

**Contact:** Pamela Bush, Emmy Llewellyn  
508-475-0032

### **Winter Sports Safety – Tips from the Brain Injury Association of MA**

Participation in winter sports activities promotes regular physical activity and can have great health benefits. However, if you are not properly prepared, these activities may lead to injury or even death. According to Education.com, each year children ages 0-14 account for more than 52,000 injuries involving skis, snowboards, snowmobiles, and sleds. Enjoy your winter sports but prevent injury by following these simple safety tips:

#### Skiing and Snowboarding:

- Some of the most severe injuries when skiing are to the head. The single most important thing you can do to protect your head is wear a helmet.
- Forty-four percent of skiing/snowboarding head injuries could be prevented by a helmet.
- Make sure you find a proper fitting helmet and use a size chart for assistance.
- Check equipment such as helmets, shoes, skis, skates, goggles and snowboards to make sure they fit comfortably and are not broken. Adjust safety bindings for skis at least once a year; snowboarders should wear gloves with built-in wrist guards.
- Stay on trails appropriate for your ability, control your speed, and be aware of your surroundings at all times.
- Take lessons from a qualified instructor and never ski or snowboard alone.

#### Snowmobiling:

- A new Massachusetts law (2010) bans children under 14 from operating all-terrain vehicles, or ATVs. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that individuals under 16 not operate snowmobiles and children under 6 years not ride on snowmobiles.

- Safety goggles and helmets approved for motorized vehicles such as scooters and motorcycles should always be worn by operators and passengers.
- Operators should obey safety rules and not speed; only use marked trails away from water and roads.

#### Sledding:

- Never sled near traffic, roads, parking lots or bodies of water; only sled during daylight hours.
- Inspect sledding areas for potential hazards such as trees, fences, rocks and telephone poles, which can cause injury.
- Do not sled headfirst or on the stomach, but in a sitting position.
- Children should wear a helmet when sledding or skating.

#### Ice Skating:

- Avoid skating on ponds, streams or bodies of water that are not properly marked for ice skating.
- Children should be accompanied by an adult on the ice at all times.
- Skate in the same direction as the crowd and never ice skate alone.

For more safety tips or facts about helmets, visit [www.biama.org](http://www.biama.org) or call the Brain Injury Association of Massachusetts (BIA-MA) at 800-242-0030. BIA-MA can provide fact cards and brochures on helmets, sports concussion and brain injury.

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, educates the public on the risks and impact of brain injury, and advocates for legislation and improved services. To learn more about sports concussion, go to [www.biama.org](http://www.biama.org).