



New Hampshire Interscholastic Athletic Association

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# Press Release

## For Immediate Release

October 27<sup>th</sup>, 2017

**RE: New Hampshire Life of an Athlete, A Program of the NHIAA, Designated as an Evidence-Based Program**

For the past four years, numerous NHIAA member school principals, athletic directors, coaches, and teachers put in an enormous amount of work to both implement and participate in the evaluation of LoA. As a result of all of this hard work across the state of New Hampshire, the NH Center for Excellence's Expert Panel approved LoA as an evidence-based program. Donna Arias, LoA Program Director at the NHIAA, said, "The evidence-based designation is a certification that the program continuously refines its process and has documented outcomes. In other words, it certifies that LoA is a good investment of time and money for schools working to prevent substance use disorders."

"This has been my life's work, Life of an Athlete is a comprehensive program that uses the intrinsic value of athletics to help kids make healthier choices," said John Underwood, founder of the Life of an Athlete (LoA) program. Underwood is a former NCAA All-American, World Masters Champion, and Olympic Coach. Mr. Underwood went on to say, "It's amazing to see how this program has grown over the years."



Jeff Collins, Executive Director of the NHIAA said, "When I was a high school principal serving on the NHIAA Council, the opportunity first came up to implement LoA through a generous grant from the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation, I was one of the first people in the room to endorse accepting the grant." Mr. Collins went on to point out that, "To me it was obvious, this was the best way to address some of the serious challenges affecting our students."



At that same time, LoA also received a Service to Science grant from the federal Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration and a grant to expand implementation from the New Hampshire Bureau of Drug and Alcohol Services. The LoA staff worked with partners from the Education Development Center (EDC) and the Community Health Institute (CHI) to create a quasi-experimental evaluation which includes both quantitative and qualitative data collected using a mixed methods design. Once the evaluation was designed, LoA entered into a contract with Dr. Pam DiNapoli from the University of

New Hampshire to complete a four-year comprehensive evaluation. "Over the past four years I have had the

opportunity to collect and analyze data from students, coaches and athletic directors and have been able to see firsthand the significant influences the program has had on student athlete knowledge and attitude towards healthy behavior choices and how the program changes social norms,” said Dr. DiNapoli.

The NHIAA is excited about this new designation and is looking forward to continued growth in these efforts to benefit students across the state of New Hampshire.

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The New Hampshire Interscholastic Athletic Association is a private not for profit organization that has served as the leader of high school athletics for its member schools in New Hampshire since 1947. The Mission of the NHIAA is to ensure fair play in competition and equal opportunity in interscholastic athletics. Located in Concord, NH the NHIAA joins 49 other state associations and the District of Columbia in statewide oversight of high school interscholastic athletics. The NHIAA follows the rules and regulations of the National Federation of High School Associations based in Indianapolis, IN.

# New Hampshire Service to Science Program

This certificate verifies that

## New Hampshire Life of an Athlete

A program of the New Hampshire Interscholastic Athletic Association

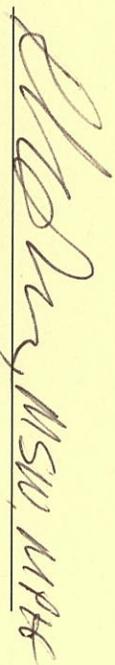
was endorsed by the New Hampshire Expert Panel  
as an **evidence-based program** on September 29, 2017

This endorsement is made by a panel of experts from the field of substance abuse services who are convened by the NH Bureau of Drug and Alcohol Services and its Center for Excellence contractor to review and score NH Service to Science applications.

Programs that are endorsed as evidence-based have demonstrated a commitment to refining program protocols and process, and a high quality, systematic evaluation documenting short-term and intermediate outcomes.



Annette Escalante, Director  
Bureau of Drug & Alcohol Services



Rachel Kohn, Data & Evaluation Project Director,  
NH Center for Excellence