UPMC SPORTS MEDICINE TO PROVIDE PHYSICAL EXAMS, SCREENINGS, IMPACT™ BASELINE TESTING FOR HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETES IN WINTER SPORTS

PITTSBURGH, October 18, 2006 — UPMC will provide pre-season physical examinations, musculoskeletal screenings and ImPACT™ concussion baseline testing to local high school athletes who will be participating in winter sports. The screenings and exams will begin at 9 a.m., Saturday, Oct. 28, at the UPMC Center for Sports Medicine, in the UPMC Sports Performance Complex, 3200 South Water St. on Pittsburgh’s South Side.

Sports medicine physicians and certified athletic trainers will conduct the screenings and exams. Pre-registration by Friday, Oct. 27, is required by all individuals and teams. The cost of the physical exams and screenings for students at UPMC-contracted schools is $20. Cost for all other students is $25. The cost for the concussion baseline testing is $40 for all students. For more information and to register, please call 412-432-3770.

Physical examinations are required by the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA) for high school sports participation. The musculoskeletal screenings, which are not required by the PIAA, include tests of muscle strength and flexibility, posture, body composition, agility and range of motion in major joints.

“Pre-season exams and screenings done by sports medicine professionals are important for growing athletes because they can help identify pre-existing medical conditions or musculoskeletal problems that may need special attention to prevent injury or illness in both male and female athletes,” said Andrew Macurak, a certified athletic trainer and coordinator of the exams. “The evaluations also can help educate student athletes about their bodies and physical capabilities and may help enhance their athletic performance in some cases,” he added.

The concussion baseline test, called ImPACT (Immediate Post-concussion Assessment and Cognitive Testing), has been proven useful in the proper management of a concussion should the injury occur during the season. Used by more than 900 high schools nationwide, it includes a 20-minute, baseline test that athletes take on a computer to measure neurocognitive function such as brain processing, speed, memory and visual motor skills. The data are collected and stored. In the event of a concussion during the season, the athlete would take the ImPACT test again, and post-injury data would be compared to baseline data to help determine the severity and effects of the injury and to help determine when it would be safe for the athlete to return to contact sports.

The UPMC Center for Sports Medicine employs the region’s largest staff of certified athletic trainers who attend to the daily sports medicine needs of athletes at 42 local high schools, 10 local colleges, the Pittsburgh Panthers, the Pittsburgh Steelers and the Pittsburgh Penguins, as well as professional dancers with the Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre. In addition to professional, elite, scholastic and amateur athletes, the center’s staff also treats many non-athletes who have musculoskeletal injuries related to physical activity.