

USA Gymnastics response to today's Indianapolis Star



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- Overview of existing policies/programs/resources regarding sexual misconduct

December 15, 2016

Below are statements from Paul Parilla, USA Gymnastics Board chair, and Steve Penny, USA Gymnastics president and CEO

Statement from Paul Parilla, USA Gymnastics Board of Directors Chairman

"Nothing is more important to the leadership of USA Gymnastics than protecting the young people who learn and train at gymnastics facilities around the country. Keeping young people safe requires sustained vigilance by everyone – coaches, athletes, parents, administrators and officials. Addressing instances of sexual misconduct has been a top priority for USA Gymnastics for years, and we are wholly committed to promoting a safe environment for athletes. We work every day to strengthen our processes, policies and procedures in this critical area.

"We are saddened when any athlete has been harmed in the course of his or her gymnastics career. We find it appalling that anyone would exploit a young athlete or child in this manner and recognize the effect this behavior can have on a person's life. We do our very best to treat each athlete with respect, dignity, care and support throughout the process of reporting and handling of abuse, including respecting his or her right to privacy. USA Gymnastics policies mandate that when anyone affiliated with USA Gymnastics or member clubs suspect potential abuse, the appropriate legal authorities should be notified.

"USA Gymnastics recently enlisted Deborah Daniels, a former federal prosecutor, to lead an independent, thorough evaluation to review and further strengthen existing USA Gymnastics policies and procedures on Safe Sport matters. Engaging this expert reflects our continued commitment to leadership on this topic.

"In addition to Daniels' work, the USA Gymnastics Board of Directors has established a policy review panel to address modifications to existing USA Gymnastics programs, policies and processes. In addition to me, as board chairman, the members of this panel are Mary Lou Retton; Casey Koenig, chair of the Board's Ethics, Grievance and Safe Sport Committee; and David Durante, chair of the Athletes' Council. The panel will complement Daniels' work and work closely with the staff to ensure the organization takes the appropriate steps to fully implement recommendations, policy changes, and governance matters as we move forward with refining our best practices. This is especially important given the emerging U.S. Center for Safe Sport and its requirements for compliance.

"USA Gymnastics has been involved since the very beginning in developing the U.S. Center for Safe Sport, an independent entity that will oversee Safe Sport education programs and investigate and adjudicate claims of sexual and related misconduct for all United States Olympic Committee-recognized National Governing Bodies. USA Gymnastics fully expects the U.S. Center for Safe Sport, targeted to launch in February, to help drive unified and clear policies for preventing, identifying and reporting misconduct that will benefit all national governing bodies.

"Steve Penny is among the strongest advocates for our athletes and has reported suspected instances of abuse to law enforcement himself. He takes their safety personally and over the course of his tenure as CEO, has strengthened USA Gymnastics policies and programs to further protect the health and wellbeing of athletes.

"At the core of every sport is people – the athletes and the thousands of individuals who support them and are dedicated to helping young people learn the sport they love, the life lessons that come from gymnastics and possibly achieve their competitive dreams. The health and well-being of these athletes is the priority, and USA Gymnastics is committed to doing everything it can to promote a safe environment for those athletes."



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never stop working to protect young people.

"Over the past few months, stories have been written about our role in this area. While these stories have largely mischaracterized our commitment, we are taking further steps to protect our athletes and make policy enhancements that create a cooperative effort with the entire gymnastics community."

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