

## ATTACHMENT I

### **Participation of Persons with Down Syndrome and Atlanto-Axial Instability**

There is evidence from medical research that up to 10% of individuals with Down syndrome have a malalignment of the cervical vertebrae C-1 and C-2 in the neck. This condition called *atlanto-axial instability* exposes individuals with Down syndrome to the possibility of injury if they participate in activities that hyper-extend or radically flex the neck or upper spine.

Special Olympics headquarters requires temporary restriction of athletes with Down syndrome who have *atlanto-axial instability* from participating in certain activities.

Prohibited activities include: butterfly stroke and diving starts in swimming, diving, pentathlon, high jump, squat lifts, equestrian sports, artistic gymnastics, football (soccer), alpine skiing, and any warm-up exercise placing undue stress on the head and neck.

Athletes with Down syndrome may be able to participate in the above sports if the athlete is examined (including full x-ray views of full extension and flexion of the neck) by a physician. This physician must have been briefed on the nature of the atlanto-axial instability condition and has determined (based on the examination) that the athlete does not have an *atlanto-axial instability* condition.

An athlete with Down syndrome who has been diagnosed by a physician as having an atlanto-axial instability condition may nevertheless participate in the sports identified above if:

- ✓ The athlete (or the parent if the athlete is a minor) confirms in writing his or her decision to proceed with these activities notwithstanding the risks created by the *atlanto-axial instability*;
- ✓ Two licensed medical professionals certify in writing that they have explained these risks to the athlete and his/her parent or guardian and that the athlete's condition does not, in their judgement, preclude the athlete from participating in Special Olympics;
- ✓ The statements and certifications are documented and provided to Accredited Programs using the standardized form approved by Special Olympics headquarters entitled "Special Release for Athletes with *Atlanto-axial Instability*" and any revisions of that form, approved by Special Olympics headquarters ("Special Release Concerning Atlanto-axial Instability").

### **Participation by Persons who Are Blood-Borne Contagious Infection Carriers**

No Accredited Program or Games Organizing Committee may exclude, isolate, or discriminate from participation in any Special Olympics training or competition any athlete who is known to be a carrier of a blood-borne contagious infection or virus.

In view of the risk that one or more Special Olympics athletes may have a blood-borne contagious infection or virus, Accredited Programs and Games Organizing Committees shall follow the "Universal Blood and Body Fluid Precautions" for every exposure to any person's blood, saliva, or other bodily fluid during training and competition.