



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The National Ataxia Foundation applauds NFL and NFLPA decision to add "ataxia" to their concussion protocol

Minneapolis, MN (October 13, 2022) – The National Ataxia Foundation, a leading nonprofit organization established to help persons with Ataxia and their families, supports the NFL and NFLPA’s addition of “ataxia” to the NFL’s concussion protocol. Ataxia describes an impairment of coordinated movement resulting from brain or nerve dysfunction. Many symptoms of ataxia mimic the physical effects of excessive drinking, such as slurred speech, imbalance, stumbling, and difficulty with fine motor skills.

“Ataxia is an under-recognized sign of neurological dysfunction,” stated Dr. George Wilmot III, Associate Professor of Neurology at Emory University following the announcement. “The NFL’s formal acknowledgment of ataxia as a possible sign of head trauma should lead to reduced risk of permanent damage for NFL players. It also has the added benefit of shining a public spotlight on other diseases that have ataxia as one of their primary features.”

Ataxia symptoms resulting from a concussion can be short- or long-term. There are also genetic forms of ataxia that are considered a rare neurological disease and are life-altering.

“Ataxia symptoms can greatly impact an individual’s ability to perform everyday tasks. Regardless of whether ataxia arises in a professional athlete or a friend or family member, it is important to consult a neurologist to understand the underlying causes of symptoms,” said NAF’s Chief Scientific Officer, Dr. Lauren Moore.

Dr. George Wilmot III, Associate Professor of Neurology at Emory University, and Dr. Lauren Moore, Chief Scientific Officer of the National Ataxia Foundation are available for media interviews to talk more about:

- What is "Ataxia"?
- How ataxia affects people?
- Who is at risk?
- What can be done to help people with ataxia?

Contact us or visit NAF's website at www.ataxia.org.

About NAF

Ataxia is a rare neurological disease affecting tens of thousands of people in the US and many thousands more around the world. Founded in 1957, NAF is a nonprofit organization established to help persons with Ataxia and their families. The Foundation's vision of a world without Ataxia will be accomplished through its primary programs of funding Ataxia research, providing vital programs and services for Ataxia families, and partnering with pharmaceutical companies in the search for treatments and a cure.

**Executive
Director:**

Andrew Rosen
andrew@ataxia.org
763-553-0020

**Media
Contact:**

Stephanie Lucas
*Communications
Director*
stephanie@ataxia.org
763-231-2744