

# A SAFER APPROACH TO SECONDARY SCHOOL SPORTS

Athletic trainers (ATs) are health care professionals who render medical services or treatments, under the direction of a physician, in accordance with their education and training and the states' statutes, rules and regulations.

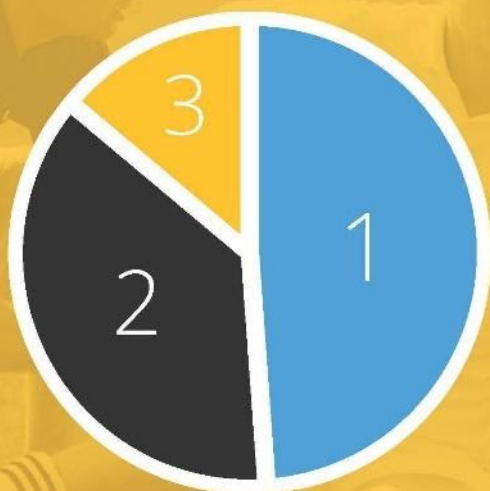
Athletic trainers in the secondary school provide a unique and unbiased continuum of care for student athletes and serve as a critical link between patients, coaches, teachers, school administration, parents and other health care providers.

## ATHLETIC TRAINING SERVICES<sup>1</sup>

Some of the medical services that athletic trainers provide include injury prevention, wellness protection, examination, assessment and diagnosis of injuries, therapeutic intervention and health care administration.

## BREAKDOWN OF SERVICES

- 1 — 48.8% Preventative Services,
- 2 — 37.2% Care for a Current Injury
- 3 — 13.9% Care for a New Injury.<sup>2</sup>



**RECURRENT INJURY  
RATES ARE 6X HIGHER  
IN GIRLS SOCCER AND  
3X TIMES HIGHER IN  
GIRLS BASKETBALL IN  
SCHOOLS WITHOUT  
ATHLETIC TRAINERS.<sup>8</sup>**

## Injury and Illness Prevention and Wellness Protection

ATs promote healthy lifestyles, enhance wellness and reduce the risk of injury and illness.

### Examples include:

- Implementing injury prevention programs.
- Developing and rehearsing venue-specific emergency action plans.
- Monitoring weather and environmental conditions.
- Educating on the signs and symptoms of injury, hydration, nutrition, etc.
- Supporting preventative efforts related to smoking, obesity, violence, mental health and substance abuse.

## Examination, Assessment and Diagnosis

ATs evaluate injuries and illnesses prior to participation, at the time of injury, in the clinic and/or on an ongoing basis to determine the best course of action.

### Examples include:

- Preparticipation physical examination (PPE) and patient history.
- Range of motion testing and functional testing.
- Baseline concussion testing.
- Routine injury evaluations.
- Return to play decisions.



**1.4 MILLION HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT ATHLETES SUSTAIN INJURIES EACH YEAR DUE TO PARTICIPATION IN INTERSCHOLASTIC SPORT PARTICIPATION.<sup>3</sup>**

## Immediate and Emergency Care

ATs provide emergency care for injury and illnesses such as concussion, cardiac arrest, spine injuries, heat stroke, diabetes, allergic reactions and asthma attacks.

### Examples include:

- Implement emergency action plans.
- Recognizing signs and symptoms of life-threatening conditions.
- Stabilize and/or prevent exacerbation of health condition.
- Immediate care for injuries such as ankle sprains, ACL tears, etc.
- Coordinate patient care and transfer.



**62% OF INJURIES OCCUR DURING PRACTICE.**

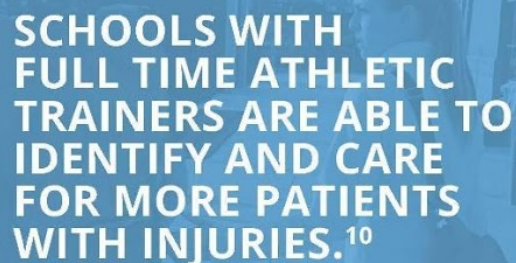
It is important that ATs be at both games and practices.<sup>4</sup> Currently, only 37% of secondary schools have full time athletic trainers.<sup>9</sup>

## Therapeutic Intervention

ATs recondition and rehabilitate injuries, illnesses and general medical conditions for optimal performance and function.

### Examples include:

- Therapeutic and conditioning techniques.
- Post-surgical rehabilitation, acute injury rehabilitation, onsite rehabilitation.
- Assisting in addressing campus-wide health conditions like MRSA, influenza or meningitis.
- Application of braces or splints.
- Treatment of injury or illness.
- Reassess injury status.
- Refer to specialists as necessary.



**SCHOOLS WITH FULL TIME ATHLETIC TRAINERS ARE ABLE TO IDENTIFY AND CARE FOR MORE PATIENTS WITH INJURIES.<sup>10</sup>**





## DID YOU KNOW?

**ATs ARE REQUIRED TO COMPLETE 50 HOURS OF CONTINUING EDUCATION EVERY TWO YEARS TO MAINTAIN THEIR CERTIFICATION. THIS ENSURES ATs STAY ABREAST WITH THE LATEST RESEARCH FOR PATIENT CARE.**

### Health Care Administration & Professional Responsibilities

ATs use best practices to promote optimal patient care and employee well-being.

**Examples include:**

- Development of Emergency Action Plans
- Ensure appropriate documentation and protocol (consent to treat, referrals, etc.).
- Track and assess outcomes.
- Develop policies and procedures to mitigate risk.
- Understand scope of practice and state laws that regulate the athletic training profession.
- Complete required continuing education.

### THE VALUE OF THE ATHLETIC TRAINER

Athletic trainers are invaluable to the secondary school and their impact reaches far beyond the field and athletic training facility. Most importantly, athletic trainers help ensure that the student athletes are properly cared for and have a safe environment to participate in sports and extracurricular activities. While athletic trainers cannot eliminate the inherent risk of injury in sports, they can help reduce the incidence and severity when injuries do occur. Athletic trainers also provide significant cost savings and reduce time loss for parents and schools.

### THE AT BENEFIT

#### Student Athlete

- Less time away from class with on campus rehabilitation.
- Fewer missed games and practices through diagnosis, treatment and referral process.
- Access to unbiased health care professional who serves as the student athlete's advocate.

#### Parents

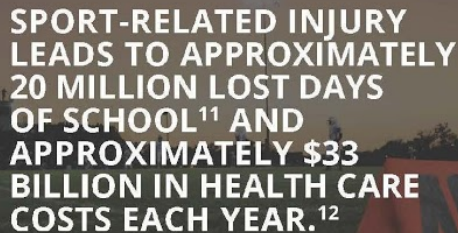
- Less time away from work or home to take child offsite for care.
- Reduced costs associated with unnecessary emergency room visits and diagnostic tests.
- Decreased rehabilitative costs before and after surgery.
- Peace of mind knowing a dedicated health care professional has child's health and safety as a priority.

#### School District

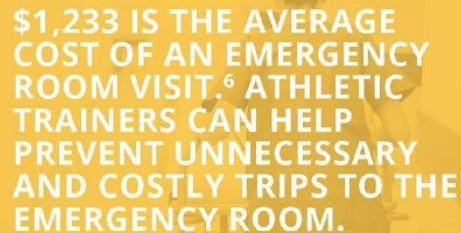
- Enhanced safety and health care for student athletes.
- Potential to reduce insurance costs based on the standard prevention protocols that the AT manages and provides.
- Reduced absenteeism.
- Improved state and league compliance related to athlete safety.
- Reduced risk of injury and litigation.

## DOLLARS AND SENSE

Here are some cost saving statistics on why it makes sense to employ an athletic trainer.



**SPORT-RELATED INJURY LEADS TO APPROXIMATELY 20 MILLION LOST DAYS OF SCHOOL<sup>11</sup> AND APPROXIMATELY \$33 BILLION IN HEALTH CARE COSTS EACH YEAR.<sup>12</sup>**

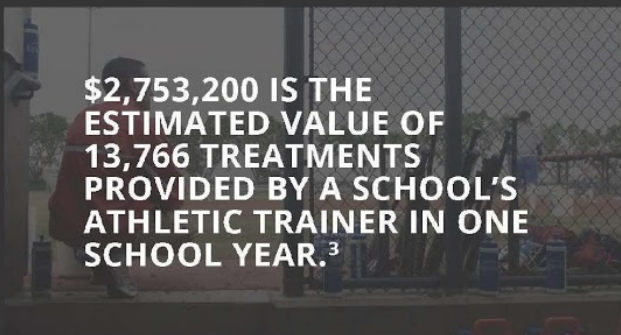


**\$1,233 IS THE AVERAGE COST OF AN EMERGENCY ROOM VISIT.<sup>6</sup> ATHLETIC TRAINERS CAN HELP PREVENT UNNECESSARY AND COSTLY TRIPS TO THE EMERGENCY ROOM.**

**32% OF PARENTS had to take time off work to bring their children to the hospital due to relatively minor injuries.<sup>5</sup> By employing a full time athletic trainer who can provide medical care onsite, parents and kids spend less time away from work and school.**



**\$14.7 MILLION IS THE ESTIMATED ANNUAL COST SAVINGS IN ONE STATE IF EVERY HIGH SCHOOL EMPLOYED A FULL TIME AT.<sup>7</sup>**



**\$2,753,200 IS THE ESTIMATED VALUE OF 13,766 TREATMENTS PROVIDED BY A SCHOOL'S ATHLETIC TRAINER IN ONE SCHOOL YEAR.<sup>3</sup>**

### REFERENCES

1. Henderson, J. The 2015 Athletic Trainer Practice Analysis Study. Omaha, NE: Board of Certification; 2015. [http://www.bocarc.org/system/document\\_versions/versions/23/original/boc-comparison-of-pa7-to-rd-pa6-20170612.pdf?1497278853](http://www.bocarc.org/system/document_versions/versions/23/original/boc-comparison-of-pa7-to-rd-pa6-20170612.pdf?1497278853)
2. Lam, K. C., Valler, A. R. S., Anderson, B. E., & McLeod, T. C. V. (2016). Athletic training services during daily patient encounters: A report from the athletic training practice-based research network. *Journal of Athletic Training*, 51(6), 435-441.
3. McLeod, T. C. V., Bliven, K. C. H., Lam, K. C., Bay, C., Valler, A. R. S., & Parsons, J. T. (2013). The national sports safety in secondary schools benchmark (N4SB) study: Defining athletic training practice characteristics. *Journal of Athletic Training*, 48(4), 483-492.
4. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS) Cost of Injury Reports. Available at: <http://wisqars.cdc.gov:8080/cost/>.
5. Abernethy L, MacAuley D. Impact of school sports injury. *British Journal of Sports Medicine* 2003;37:354-355. <http://bjsm.bmj.com/content/37/4/354>
6. How Much Will I Get Charged for This? Patient Charges for Top Ten Diagnoses in the Emergency Department Nolan Caldwell, Tanja Srebotnjak, Tiffany Wang, Renee Hsia Published: February 27, 2013 <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0055491> <http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0055491#s3>
7. Hambleton, MSA, AT, ATC, M., Smith, PhD, CAA, S., Evers, EdD, AT, ATC, C., & Schneider, PhD, W. Cost Savings Analysis of a High School Athletic Trainer. *International Athletic Administration*, (Winter 2012), 8-11.
8. LaBella L. "A Comparative Analysis of Injury Rates and Patterns Among Girls' Soccer and Basketball Players." Paper presented October 22, 2012 at American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) National Conference and Exhibition, New Orleans, LA; High Schools with Athletic Trainers Have More Diagnosed Concussions, Fewer Overall Injuries. *Science Daily* <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2012/10/121022080649.htm>
9. Riana R, Pryor, Douglas J, Casa, Lesley W, Vandermark, Rebecca L, Stearns, Sarah M, Attanasio, Garrett J, Fontaine, and Alex M. Wafer (2015) Athletic Training Services In Public Secondary Schools: A Benchmark Study. *Journal of Athletic Training*; February 2015, Vol. 50, No. 2, pp. 156-162.
10. Zachary Y. Kerr, Robert C. Lynall, Timothy C. Mauntel, and Thomas P. Dompier (2016) High School Football Injury Rates and Services by Athletic Trainer Employment Status. *Journal of Athletic Training*; January 2016, Vol. 51, No. 1, pp. 70-73.
11. Janda DH. The Awakening of a Surgeon: A Family Guide to Preventing Sports Injuries and Deaths. Ann Arbor, MI: Institute for Preventative Sports Medicine; 2003.
12. Summer sports top injury list. *Ortho Today*, 2022;22(16):13.

**AT** YOUR OWN  
**RISK**

brought to you by

**NATA**  
NATIONAL ATHLETIC TRAINERS ASSOCIATION  
HEALTH CARE FOR LIFE & SPORT