

# A SAFER APPROACH TO INTERNATIONAL 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 local statutes, rules and regulations.**

## ATHLETIC TRAINING SERVICES

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

### 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.

### 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.

### 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.

### 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.

### Health Care Administration and 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.
- Comply with local health care regulations as they pertain to sports medicine.
- Complete required continuing education.
- In addition to regular examination and diagnosis, ATs can recommend and exchange information such as concussion policy, return to learn and return to play with staff.

Athletic trainers in the international school setting 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 healthcare providers. In addition to the medical services provided below, ATs in the international school setting can also provide additional benefits such as teaching, strength & conditioning, and act as a liaison with local practitioners.

## THE VALUE OF THE ATHLETIC TRAINER

Athletic trainers are invaluable to the international 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.

## 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.

## 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.
- Decreased rehabilitative costs before and after injury.
- Peace of mind knowing a dedicated health care professional has child's health and safety as a priority.

### Schools and Leagues

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

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

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

It is important that ATs be at both games and practices.

**SCHOOLS WITH FULL TIME ATHLETIC TRAINERS ARE ABLE TO IDENTIFY AND CARE FOR MORE PATIENTS WITH INJURIES.**

\* Research and references used in this document are US based. References available upon request.

To learn more, visit [nata.org](http://nata.org) and [AtYourOwnRisk.org](http://AtYourOwnRisk.org)

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