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NATIONAL ATHLETIC TRAINERS' ASSOCIATION HOSTS VIRTUAL MEDIA BRIEFING:

***THE CRITICAL ROLE OF THE EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN:
SAVING LIVES & REDUCING RISK OF INJURY***

**Interdisciplinary Group of Health Care Experts Shed Light on Updated Guidelines
Published in Journal of Athletic Training**

DALLAS, TX (July 23, 2024) –[The National Athletic Trainers' Association](https://www.nata.org) (NATA) hosted a virtual media briefing today, *The Critical Role of the Emergency Action Plan (EAP): Saving Lives & Reducing Risk of Injury*, and unveiled ground breaking updates from its just published [Position Statement: Emergency Action Plan Development and Implementation in Sport](#). This is an update to its 2002 recommendations and appears in the current issue of the [Journal of Athletic Training](#), the association's scientific publication.

To review the full recording, please click [here](#).

The occurrence of catastrophic injuries in sports remains a serious concern, underscored by recent high-profile incidents. The collapse of Damar Hamlin in January 2023 and the cardiac arrest of a Kansas City Chiefs player on June 6, 2024, both highlight the critical importance of having well-developed and rehearsed EAPs.

While these recent incidents have occurred at the highest level of football, they reflect a broader reality: catastrophic injuries can happen at any level and in any sport. With the Olympics set to begin tomorrow, back-to-school sports around the corner and club and youth sports ongoing, the critical role of the EAP is even more paramount.

“NATA is committed to providing the gold standard of care at all levels of sport, said [NATA President A.J. Duffy III, MS, ATC, PT](#) and event moderator. “This updated EAP statement is critical to keeping athletes safe, particularly at the secondary school level where only 37% of

high schools have access to a fulltime athletic trainer. We hope these very critical guidelines are reviewed and implemented to help reduce risk of injury and save lives.”

“The document was developed through a robust evidence review and expert consensus,” added [Samantha Scarneo-Miller](#), program director and assistant professor, Division of Athletic Training, West Virginia University; and chair of the position statement writing group. “Development and implementation of a comprehensive EAP is vital to ensuring positive patient outcomes.”

Key Insights & Statistics

- Since the 1982–1983 academic year, the National Center for Catastrophic Sports Injury Research has recorded more than 3,000 catastrophic sport-related injuries among high school and collegiate athletes.^{[1](#)}
- Across high school and collegiate sports, football, basketball, track and field, wrestling, soccer and baseball have the highest rates of catastrophic sport-related injuries.^{[1](#)}
- The leading causes of death during or resulting from sport participation are sudden cardiac arrest (SCA), traumatic brain injury (TBI), and exertional heat stroke.^{[1](#)}
- Spinal cord injuries account for a large number of nonfatal catastrophic injuries.^{[1](#)}

Panelists

In addition to President Duffy and Dr. Scarneo-Miller, other participants included:

[Rick Burkholder, MS, ATC](#), vice president of sports medicine and performance, Kansas City Chiefs

[Darryl P. Conway, MA, AT, ATC](#), executive senior associate athletic director and chief health & welfare officer, University of Michigan Athletic Department, Stephen M. Ross Athletic Campus; and member, position statement writing group

[Jonathan Drezner, MD](#), professor at the University of Washington (UW) School of Medicine; director of the UW Medicine Center for Sports Cardiology; team physician for the Seattle Seahawks; editor-in-chief, British Journal of Sports Medicine; former president of the American Medical Society for Sports Medicine; and member, position statement writing group

[Shelly Jones, ATC](#), head athletic trainer, Aloha High School (Beaverton, Oregon); sports medicine advisor, Oregon School Activities Association; sports medicine advisory committee member, National Federation of State High School Associations

NATA Emergency Action Plan Position Statement Key Updates

An emergency action plan (EAP) is a written document detailing the preparations and on-site emergency response of health care professionals and other stakeholders to catastrophic or potentially catastrophic injuries in a prehospital setting. This updated position statement incorporates several ground breaking updates:

- **Innovative Development Procedures:** This is the first position statement developed under NATA’s new procedures, emphasizing an objective approach to author team selection, considering diversity in gender, race, location, specialty, and setting. The development also involved a thorough literature review and a robust recommendation-building process.
- **Venue and Sport Specific EAPs:** Unlike previous guidelines focusing solely on venue-specific EAPs, the new statement recommends the creation of EAPs tailored to both the venue and the specific sport. This recognizes that different sports at the same venue may require distinct emergency responses.
 - *Example:* A soccer match in a stadium might necessitate different personnel and resources compared to a football game at the same venue.
- **EAP Coordinator Role:** The statement stresses the importance of designating an EAP Coordinator. Athletic Trainers (ATs) should not shoulder the responsibility alone but should collaborate with various stakeholders to ensure effective EAP development and implementation.
- **Comprehensive Documentation:** It calls for documentation of EAP rehearsals, approval strategies, and incident reports to enhance preparedness and accountability.
- **Pre-Event Medical Meetings:** The document introduces the concept of a pre-event medical meeting, replacing the term “medical time out” to avoid confusion. These meetings ensure all stakeholders are briefed on emergency procedures, equipment locations, and emergency signals.

Additional Resources

- [Emergency Action Plan Template](#)
- [EAP Checklist](#)
- [Risk Analysis](#)
- [Pre-Event Medical Meeting](#)
- [Emergency Equipment List](#)
- [Incident Report Template](#)
- [After Action Debriefing](#)
- [Rehearsal Scenario Considerations](#)
- [Rehearsal Scenario – AT Present](#)
- [Rehearsal Scenario – AT Not Present, Cardiac](#)
- [Rehearsal Scenario – AT Not Present, Exertional Heat Stroke](#)

For more emergency planning information please visit www.nata.org and the NATA’s At Your Own Risk website, www.atyourownrisk.org

About NATA: National Athletic Trainers' Association – Health Care for Life & Sport

Athletic trainers are health care professionals who specialize in the prevention, diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation of injuries and sport-related illnesses. They prevent and treat chronic musculoskeletal injuries from sports physical and occupational activity and provide immediate care for acute injuries. Athletic trainers offer a continuum of care that is unparalleled in health care. The National Athletic Trainers' Association represents and supports 40,000 members of the athletic training profession. Visit nata.org for more information.

References

¹Bryan, M.A., et al., Sports- and Recreation-Related Concussions in US Youth. *Pediatrics*, 2016. 138(1).

²Zuckerman, S.L., et al., Epidemiology of Sports-Related Concussion in NCAA Athletes From 2009–2010 to 2013–2014: Incidence, Recurrence, and Mechanisms. *Am J Sports Med*, 2015. 43(11): p. 2654-62

³Coronado, V.G., et al., Trends in Sports- and Recreation-Related Traumatic Brain Injuries Treated in US Emergency Departments: The National Electronic Injury Surveillance System-All Injury Program (NEISS-AIP) 2001–2012. *J Head Trauma Rehabil*, 2015. 30(3): p. 185-97.

⁴<https://bjsm.bmj.com/content/56/17/981>

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