



MEMORANDUM

August 14, 2003

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TO: NCAA Chief Executive Officers.

FROM: Matt Mitten, chair
NCAA Committee on Competitive Safeguards and Medical Aspects
of Sports.

SUBJECT: Support for Certified Athletic Trainers in Intercollegiate Athletics.

The health and safety principle of the NCAA's constitution provides that it is the responsibility of each member institution to protect the health of, and provide a safe environment for, each of its participating student-athletes.

In light of the lengthened playing seasons (regular season, non-traditional seasons, vacation periods, summer months) and increased expectations on athletes regarding participation in practice times (weight lifting, conditioning, skill instruction), the NCAA Committee on Competitive Safeguards and Medical Aspects of Sports (CSMAS) recommends that NCAA institutions examine the adequateness of their sports medicine coverage. In particular, whether the increased time demands placed on certified athletic trainers reduces their ability to effectively provide high quality care to all student-athletes.

At its June meeting, the CSMAS reviewed the National Athletic Trainers' Association (NATA) revised document "Recommendations and Guidelines for Appropriate Medical Coverage of Intercollegiate Athletics," (AMCIA), available online at www.nata.org. The CSMAS encourages NCAA institutions to reference the NATA AMCIA in their assessment of the adequateness of their sports medicine coverage.

The addition of sport teams, non-traditional seasons, scrimmages outside of the regular season, skill instruction sessions, junior varsity teams and host coverage for championship events have added significant hours that are driving professionals away from the practice of athletic training. In addition, the highly competitive nature of today's athletics in all divisions require athletic trainers to spend more time in treatment and rehabilitation of injuries rather than merely event coverage. Consequently, additional administrative duties are required in conjunction to these tasks, including educational programming, drug testing, medical record keeping and filing insurance claims.

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The latest trends imply that certified athletic trainers are leaving the college setting or the profession as a whole due to the stress of the job from long hours, low pay, consecutive days without time off and high travel demands. Stress within the job setting can lead to fatigue, short tempers, impatience and is linked to depression, anxiety, weight gain, and cardiovascular disease; all of which can adversely effect the adequacy and quality of sports medicine care provided to NCAA student-athletes.

All persons participating in, or associated with, NCAA intercollegiate athletics share the responsibility to protect student-athlete health and safety through appropriate medical coverage of its sports and supporting activities.

Comments and questions may be directed to David Klossner, assistant director of education outreach, at 317/917-6222.

MM:ag

cc: NCAA Directors of Athletics