

Strategies, Successes, Pitfalls When Working To Hire An Athletic Trainer

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The Stats

- Today more than 7.8 million high school athletes compete each year.
- Keeping youth healthy, active and in the game is important not only for students and parents, but also for schools and communities at large.
- As the number of student athletes continues to increase, so does the potential for injury. 🎬
- In 2013, there were an estimated 1.24 million emergency room visits for injuries related to the 14 most commonly played sports in children under 19.
- Approximately 62% of sports injuries occur during practice
- Among youth, those ages 15-17 experience the highest rate of emergency room visits for sports injuries.



The Value

- Schools that employ athletic trainers have been able to show cost savings of as much as \$80,000 a year to student athletes and their families.
 - Hambleton. Cost Savings Analysis of a High School Athletic Trainer. International Athletic Administration, (Winter 2012), 8-11.
- Preliminary results from the Korey Stringer Institute have determined that schools WITHOUT Full Time Athletic Training Services:
 - Have a 2.5x higher average claim rate for athletic injuries
 - Pay 4x more money in average claims cost for athletic injuries



Value

- A 2012 study by the American Academy of Pediatrics showed that having an athletic trainer as a part of a school's athletic program makes school sports safer
- Schools without an athletic trainer reported:
 - Reported 1.2-1.7 times the number of injuries
 - 3-5 times higher rates of preventable recurring issues
 - Concussion injury rates were more than 4.5 times higher in schools without staff athletic trainers = UNDETECTED CONCUSSIONS

What Can SMAC Members Do To Improve AT Services?

- Improve the Job Description of the AT
 - medical job description of an ATC training and competencies in the legal and academic arena as we use ours as physician extenders and educators;
 - the other is their role in scope of practice with RTP in our state/how we interact as a medical team
- Physician Groups/ Hospitals
 - Consider physician group and hospital group costs and what the AT does to improve these costs
 - Ask these groups to approach school boards and school districts in the support of the AT model to improve healthcare



How you tell/convince the AD and school board to hire an AT?

- Provide data driven decisions
 - Collect injury information, cost, time loss to injury
- Ratio of coaches/athletes vs AT/athletes
- Number of events per season
- Insurance policies reductions?
 - Greenville County Schools example

Strategies For Hiring An AT

- Gain support from advocates
 - Players, parents, school board, booster clubs, state reps, mayor, high school activities association, media, hospitals, physician groups, orthopedic groups, local EMS, insurance companies, local pro teams, etc
- Raise awareness
 - Go to the media, suggest an article about improving care
 - Letter writing campaign
 - Host a safety awareness night
 - Create a petition advocating for sports safety to garner attention of local leaders
- Fundraise
 - Determine the cost for a sports medicine program and set a goal
 - Minimize expenses and get local supporters to assist
 - Add athletic fees to students to support the athletics budget to fund AT
 - Obtain a % of proceeds from concession revenue



Strategies

- Physician groups and hospital need to help ATs address the medical job description of Athletic Trainers and competencies in the legal and academic arena
- Support ATs in their scope of practice especially with RTP
 - Ex. concussion legislation and RTP
- Consult with others who have show physician group and hospital group costs with ATs

Examples of Success

- \$1.2 Million Grant to Fund ATs
 - Hawaii Dept of Education presented with community-based educational platform and used survey data to determine current practices and injury rates.
- Dallas Independent School District
 - Parent, Athletic Director, and AT teamed up to propose a budget reallocation that would fund an AT and a facility at each high school in the district
 - \$3 million was allocated to increase the staff from 10 to 22.
- Student Athlete Foundation of KC (SAFEKC)
 - Non-profit with the goal of employing full time ATs in local high schools
 - SAFEKC partnered with local non-profits, for profits, medical groups, physicians to raise funds for a "Community Health Initiative"
 - 3 ATs were provided for 5 high schools in Wyandotte County, KS
 - To date, 8 full time ATs serve 4,500 students at 10 high schools and 21 middle schools



Common Barriers

- Funding
 - Athletic Trainers will actually save your school, you parents, and your community money!!
- False Sense of Security “Won’t Happen To Me Attitude”
 - In depth qualitative study conducted at KSI examined sudden death at the secondary school setting from the NCCSIR database from 2000-2013 supports this theme

Reality vs. Perception

Did not suspect a sudden death to occur:

- “... deep down inside you go... that (sudden death) is never going to happen” -Athletic Director
- “I went through all that training, but you never think that you’re ever actually going to use it” - Principal
- **“Glad it happens someplace else, and not to you”** -Athletic Director

Could not have been prevented:

- “If we had done it 100% perfect, saving seconds, it wouldn’t have made a difference” -Principal
- **“I don’t think any more preparedness would have helped us”** -Athletic Director

Devastating Impact

- When asked what was the overall impact of the death on yourself and the community:
 - “Heart wrenching experience” -Athletic Director
 - “A very large impact, and I think we are **still dealing with today**” - Principal
 - “Life changing for everyone around” -Athletic Director

Reactive Changes Post Death

- When asked what changes have been made after the death occurred:
 - 8/11 responded with changes
- “We have much better procedures in place than we did at that point in time” - Athletic Director
- “We have gone to training all of our coaches in CPR... and increased the number of AEDs we have” -Athletic Trainer
- “I’m not sure how long ago we got our (athletic) trainers put in our school, but it has been a great thing for us” -Athletic Director

Pro Athletic Trainer-isms

- Question: “What medical provider is hired by a school district to take care of kids illnesses and medical emergencies during the school day?”
- Answer: “Nurses”
- Question “Why do we have nurses in schools?”
- Answer: “Because teachers are not qualified to handle illnesses and medical emergencies during the day.”
- Question: “What medical provider is in place to take care of kids illnesses and medical emergencies after school when they are exerting themselves?”
- Answer; “Coaches”
- “Do you trust them with your child’s life in a medical situation?”



Pro Athletic Trainer-isms

- Who monitors the swimming pool during family swim time, aqua club practices? A lifeguard. Why not provide the same level of care to all of your other student athletes. They deserve the very best in care as well.
- If your high school athletics program can afford to field a football team, you can afford at AT
- If you had every team defer buying uniforms by one additional year you could use that money to start the process of hiring a FT AT.
- Who takes care of the concussed students and makes sure that they get proper care to return to learn?
- Who can help reduce time lost due to musculo-skeletal injuries to the maintenance/custodial staff?



Key Materials In Support Of Hiring An AT?

- NATA Secondary School Value Model
 - <http://www.nata.org/professional-interests/job-settings/secondary-school/secondary-school-value-model>
- NATA Strategies For Hiring An AT
 - <http://www.nata.org/public#strategies>
- KSI NATA Athletic Training Locations and Services (ATLAS) Project
 - <http://ksi.uconn.edu/nata-atlas/>
- NATA Safe Sports School Award
 - <http://www.nata.org/advocacy/youth-sports-safety/safe-sports-schools>,
 - A self reflection tool to see what type of athletic healthcare program is the gold standard.



Questions To Promote Discussion?

What barriers does your state have to hiring Athletic Trainers?



Questions To Promote Discussion?

We want to hire ATs but we don't know where to find them?



Questions To Promote Discussion?

Who takes care of all of the policies, laws, standards of care, recommendations in the schools in your state?

