

Pennsylvania Student-Athletes See Advancements in Sports Medicine and Concussion Care From Athletic Trainers

The Pennsylvania Athletic Trainers' Society show that the 2011-2012 academic year has seen many advancements in health care for student-athletes and the public with the passage of the licensure bill for Athletic Trainers, the Safety in Youth Sports Act addressing concussion care and an increase in schools with access to an Athletic Trainer.



Senator Tomlinson and members of the PATS Board of Directors and Governmental Affairs Committee in the Senate Chambers recognizing Athletic Trainers Licensure.

"The AT often sees the athlete on a daily basis, and thus has the opportunity to establish a trusting relationship in which the athletes become more comfortable in reporting injuries." – Brooke de Lench founder of MomsTeam Wilkes-Barre, PA (PRWEB) May 23, 2012

The 2011-2012 academic year has seen advancements in health care for student-athletes and the public. The athletic training licensure bills (Senate Bills 957 / 967) were signed by Governor Corbett on December 22nd, 2011 as Acts 123 and 124. These Acts officially became law on February, 20th, 2012 recognizing athletic trainers officially as LICENSED health care professionals within the Commonwealth.

Licensure for athletic trainers (ATs) was needed in Pennsylvania in order to best protect the public. Licensure is recognized as the most restrictive form of professional and occupational regulation. Under licensure laws, it is illegal for a person to practice a profession without first meeting state standards. In Pennsylvania, athletic trainers must be graduates of an accredited Athletic Training Education Program, pass the national Board of Certification exam, and remain current with their continuing education credits.

Licensed Athletic Trainers (LATs) working in the Commonwealth protect and enhance the health and welfare of our clients through prevention, recognition, management, and rehabilitation of injuries. Athletic Trainers have been recognized as health care professionals since 1985 in the Medical Practice Act, the law that relates to practicing medicine in PA. The State Board of Medicine and the State Board of Osteopathic Medicine Rules and Regulations further define the licensure and practice standards of athletic trainers.

On November 14th, 2011, Governor Corbett held a ceremonial signing for the "Safety in Youth Sports Act," at Lower Dauphin High School. PATS was invited to be a part of this signing due to their contributions to the legislation's language. Also present were Secretary of Education Ron Tomalis, and sponsors of the legislation Sen. Pat Browne



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(R-Lehigh) and Rep. Tim Briggs (D-Montgomery). This Act establishes standards to managing concussions and traumatic brain injuries to student athletes.

The percentage of Pennsylvania Secondary Schools who have access to professional quality health care provided by a Licensed Athletic Trainer (LAT) at the school has risen from 81% during the 2010-2011 academic year to 86% during the current 2011- 2012 academic year. This translates to an increase of 36 more schools with access to ATs. This marks a significant commitment by school districts to insure student-athletes have proper on-site healthcare despite challenging economic times.

Parent groups also know the benefits and necessity of having athletic trainers. MomsTeam, a national organization founded by Brooke de Lench in 2000 is dedicated to one primary mission: "to make sure that youth sports are safe, affordable, stress free and more fun!" The MomsTeam website <http://www.MomsTeam.com> has over 10,000 + pages of information and videos for youth sports parents and has become the most trusted resource of sports parenting information.

MomsTeam has long advocated that parents have the right to have a certified athletic trainer (ATC) on staff of their child's team. They have developed a video that strongly encourages ALL schools to have an athletic trainer which can be viewed here: <http://ow.ly/9uACw> Brooke de Lench, reports "an AT is so important that he or she should be the next hire after the head coach." She further states, "The AT often sees the athlete on a daily basis, and thus has the opportunity to establish a trusting relationship in which the athletes become more comfortable in reporting injuries."

The Pennsylvania Athletic Trainers' Society (PATS) is a progressive organization of health care professionals who work under the direction of a licensed physician. PATS represents approximately 3000 Certified Athletic Trainers and Athletic Training Students in Pennsylvania. This is currently the largest number of Athletic Trainers (ATs) of any state in the nation. Further, Pennsylvania boasts one of the highest numbers of accredited Athletic Training Education Programs in the nation (20).

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