

Date: September 8, 2020

To: Nebraska DHHS 407 Technical Review Committee for Athletic Trainers

From: Samantha Wilson, EdD, ATC – Director, Athletic Training Program – Nebraska Wesleyan University

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Re: Support for Nebraska State Athletic Trainers' Association Proposal to Update Athletic Training Statutes

Dear Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services,

As program directors for the Athletic Training Programs in Nebraska, we are writing this letter of support for the Nebraska State Athletic Trainers' Association (NSATA) efforts to update the Athletic Training Statutes in the State of Nebraska. We believe the changes put forth by the NSATA are vital for the athletic training profession and align with the professional education standards currently taught in academic programs for entry-level athletic trainers.

The athletic training profession can be described by the five Domains of Athletic Training which are 1) Injury and Illness Prevention and Wellness Promotion, 2) Examination, Assessment and Diagnosis, 3) Immediate and Emergency Care, 4) Therapeutic Intervention and 5) Healthcare Administration and Professional Responsibility. These domains serve as pillars of our educational programs and clinicians practicing athletic training in our state and throughout the country. We believe the proposed statutes would allow the licensed athletic trainers here in Nebraska to practice at the top of their scope based on their educational preparation. Additionally, these changes will also allow our education programs to better prepare students with the knowledge and skills needed to function as licensed athletic trainers, whether here in Nebraska or in another jurisdiction.

Athletic training programs are accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education (CAATE). Like many professional allied healthcare education programs, athletic training education has evolved significantly since 1998, which is when the current statutes were enacted. To ensure educational quality, the CAATE sets forth specific guidelines for programs regarding programmatic structure, didactic education, and clinical education. Most recently, the CAATE has elevated the minimum level of education by requiring all programs to transition to the master's level over the next several years. This change comes with an update to education standards beginning in the 2020-2021 academic year.

Our programs provide rich didactic and clinical education experiences for athletic training students to learn knowledge and skills related to prevention, evaluation, treatment, and rehabilitation of several injuries and illnesses common in physically active populations. The statutes, as currently written, limit athletic trainers from providing the full scope of care at their present level of education. Despite the term "athletic" in the name of our profession, our students are educated and trained to treat a variety of patient and client populations, particularly patients requiring some aspect of physical activity in their daily lives. We believe the proposed statutes will increase potential employment opportunities in Nebraska such as in clinics and industrial settings. The proposed statutes will also create additional educational opportunities for our students in new settings, where students have been unable to get experiences previously here in Nebraska. Increasing our educational opportunities will assist us in educating future athletic trainers to work here in Nebraska, or those who may seek employment in another state.

A primary goal of the 407 process is to ensure public safety in the proposed changes to statutory language. The faculty and clinical preceptors in our programs educate, supervise and assess each student's ability to safely and effectively perform skills related to providing athletic training services. Students can safely perform the skills afforded to athletic trainers with modernization of these statutes. These changes will simply allow licensed athletic trainers in Nebraska to legally provide services similar to those provided by our athletic training colleagues in other states.

Moreover, practicing in a legal and ethical manner is of utmost importance for any healthcare profession and athletic training is no different. Our programs educate students regarding local, state and federal statutes related to the practice of athletic training. Additionally, practicing in an ethical manner is a requirement of our students. They are assessed on these abilities throughout their time in our programs. Furthermore, students are instructed regarding their professional responsibility to report illegal and unethical behavior to the appropriate authorities for the purposes of public safety and to comply with Code 3 of the Board of Certification Code of Professional Practice.

In summary, we strongly support the NSATA's efforts to update the Athletic Training Statutes. We would be happy to provide further testimony or written documentation if deemed necessary by the committee.

Respectfully,



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