



National Athletic Trainers' Association (NATA)
Recommendations for Comprehensive Health Reform Legislation
Recognizing the Unique Role of Athletic Trainers in our Healthcare System

The National Athletic Trainers' Association (NATA), represents more than 30,000 licensed and certified athletic trainers (ATs) who are highly educated and credentialed healthcare professionals who provide injury prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and rehabilitation to patients and clients of all ages. ATs work under their state license and scopes of practice and all athletic trainers graduate with at least a bachelor's degree with a major in athletic training. Almost 70 percent of ATs have a master's degree or greater, and in 47 states they are recognized statutorily.

NATA strongly supports the efforts of Congress to reform the healthcare system. The following are recommendations for ensuring that ATs are fully recognized under Medicare and federal health professions programs for the vital role they play as a part of the healthcare workforce. Given the unique care provided by ATs, they are ideal health providers for rehabilitative services and physical medicine.

Restore Equal Access to Athletic Trainers Under Medicare

As an important part of health reform, NATA supports legislative language from the *Athletic Trainers' Equal Access to Medicare Act of 2009* (H.R.1137), which will restore the authority of physicians to determine the type of treatment that best meets the clinical needs of each patient. To accomplish these desired reforms in our healthcare system, providers at every level, in all settings, must be available and ready to provide quality care to patients and ensure patients have access to quality care provided by athletic trainers under the Medicare program.

H.R. 1137 will amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to give patients access to therapy services provided "incident to" a physician's professional services. Additionally, this legislation will allow for coverage of certified athletic trainers services under Part B of Medicare, including those provided in rural health clinics and Federally Qualified Health Centers.

Prior to the adoption of a 2005 Centers of Medicare and Medicaid Services rule change, physicians had the ability to choose the licensed and authorized health professional that they deemed most appropriate to help their Medicare patients recover from injuries or debilitating conditions.

Recommendation: NATA urges Congress to adopt the provisions from H.R. 1137 to allow coverage of certified athletic trainers' services under Part B of Medicare.

Ensure Athletic Trainers are part of the Healthcare Workforce Team

Athletic training encompasses the prevention, diagnosis, and intervention of emergency, acute, and chronic medical conditions involving impairment, functional limitations, and disabilities. ATs, by virtue of their academic and clinical education, are staunch supporters of the team medicine concept. Early and proactive medical intervention has proven to be effective in patient recovery. ATs frequently address the needs of those in Medically Underserved Areas and designated healthcare workforce shortage areas.

Recommendation: NATA respectfully requests that Congress include athletic trainers as qualified health care providers in the National Health Service Corps, any programs related to the delivery of primary care services or the public health workforce, and the delivery of services in community health clinics and school based clinics, including athletic training clinics.