



March 2016

Dear Parent,

Please let me be the first to make you aware that March is National Athletic Trainers Month.

Did you know that in the state of Rhode Island there are over 42,000 students enrolled in high schools? Of those, there are over 25,000 student-athletes. Statistics will show there will be over 1 million injuries nationally with well over 150,000 emergency room visits for concussions alone. Did you also know that out of the 56 public/semi-private schools our state, only 29 have a Certified Athletic Trainer (AT) providing quality health care to these student-athletes, but out of that number, only 9 positions are full time?

What does an Athletic Trainer do and why does my child's high school need one? An Athletic Trainer is an allied health professional, who at minimum has a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university and is certified by the National Athletic Trainers' Association Board of Certification (NATABOC). Rhode Island, along with all 50 states, requires ATs to maintain their current NATABOC certification and also requires a state license issued by the Department of Health. Athletic Trainers are highly skilled and educated health professionals who work under the direction of a licensed physician to provide health care for athletes at all levels of competition. ATs are proficient in injury assessment, evaluation, and rehabilitation, as well as treatment of general medical conditions. ATs are also at the forefront of concussion baseline testing, assessment, management and graded return to play/learn protocols.

Full-time high school athletic trainers offer the additional benefit of being available during the school day to assist injured athletes with recovery, education and rehabilitation. Having these services at your child's school can tremendously reduce lost classroom time for your student-athlete, with the added benefit of potentially reducing lost work time for parents or guardians trying to get their child to physician visits, diagnostic testing and rehabilitation appointments.

The Rhode Island Athletic Training Association (RIATA) along with the National Athletic Training Association (NATA) is part of a national campaign to ensure that your high school student-athlete is safe as s/he participates in his or her respective sports or afternoon activities. The RIATA is currently working with state legislators to require an athletic trainer at every high school in the state. Please contact your local representative to vote YES for Bill H7639 to require an athletic trainer at all high schools. To find your representatives' information please visit [www.rilin.state.ri.us/representatives/default.aspx](http://www.rilin.state.ri.us/representatives/default.aspx). Thank you.

Sincerely,

*Andrew Laguno*, MSED, ATC, CSCS, PES

RIATA President