



**NATA's eighth annual
National Athletic Training Month (NATM)**

Kick-off: March 1, 2008

Theme: **"Who's taking care of your kids?"**

In support of the NATA strategic plan, our goal this year is to continue to reach those individuals and organizations that can help make a difference for athletic trainers when it comes to legislation and employment — especially in the secondary school setting. We are asking all NATA members to review the suggestions below, in order to educate stakeholders on the importance and value of athletic trainers to patients, clients and athletes. This grassroots activity, along with media coverage, will improve the awareness and position of the profession. Please visit www.nata.org/natm for additional information.

If you have any questions or need additional information, contact your PR Committee and Governmental Affairs Committee district representatives (see last page) or Public Relations Manager, Ellen Satlof, at (800) 879-6282, ext.159 (ellen@nata.org).

When promoting the profession, remember the following:

- Always refer to yourself as a "certified athletic trainer" or "athletic trainer." State this clearly when talking with others. According to the Board of Certification, "ATC" can only be used following a name (e.g., "John Smith, ATC") and cannot be used as a noun. And with all the recent news about the Mitchell Report, Major League Baseball, and the personal trainers associated with steroid distribution and use by players, it is more important now than ever to drive home the distinction between ATHLETIC TRAINERS and PERSONAL TRAINERS.
- Never use the term "trainer." In doing so, you are not distinguishing yourself and your peers from personal trainers.
- Reinforce that athletic trainers are health care professionals who work in a variety of settings and with all kinds of people — not just athletes.

National Athletic Training Month 2008 to-do list



- Determine your target audience (e.g., school board, legislators, employers, hospital administrators, rehab directors, medical and other health care societies, etc.).
- Seek advice from colleagues who work in marketing, public relations and sports information. When adding a legislative component, be sure to involve your state governmental affairs committee chair.
- Review NATA videos (<http://www.nata.org/video/index.htm>) and podcasts (<http://www.nata.org/podcasts/>) to see which ones will fit into your plan.
- Begin steps to obtain local and state proclamations.
- Prepare public service announcements (PSAs) and promotional materials.
- Develop media contact lists.
- Order NATA brochures and videos (http://www.nata.org/downloads/documents/305_Brochure-Video_Order_Form.pdf).
- Define specifics of selected activities.
- Create a schedule of confirmed activities.
- Target physicians' offices, hospitals, rehab clinics, insurance companies, school boards, medical and allied health societies and potential employers as part of your outreach efforts.
- Establish and renew media relationships through e-mails, phone calls and meetings.
- Send news releases and promotional materials to print and broadcast media, newsletters of PTAs, medical societies, local government officials and others. Follow up with phone calls and e-mails.
- Follow up with TV, radio and newspaper reporters and producers about story ideas for March.
- In addition to sportswriters, contact health care and business reporters and possibly education reporters. Which reporter you contact depends on your particular story angle.
- Execute plans.
- Send links to videos and send link to "Resources for Employers" (<http://www.nata.org/employers/index.htm>). Of particular interest will be the "Day in the Life" series and "Secondary School Value Model."
- Send NATM electronic greeting card (<http://www.nata.org/natm>).
- Educate school officials, other allied health care professionals and employers about NATM and the athletic training profession.
- Take photos and save all media coverage.
- Thank reporters and producers who cover your events.
- Send a summary of your NATM activities to your PR Committee district representative (see last page for contact information).



Make the most of National Athletic Training Month

Since our first NATM in 2001, NATA members have creatively and effectively generated awareness for our profession — to the public, employers, health care colleagues, elected officials, other stakeholders and the news media. Following are suggestions to help spread the word in your area.

Political involvement:

- Host an athletic training day at your statehouse, and include complimentary health screenings conducted by local certified athletic trainers.
- Host a site visit for federal and state legislators at your high school, college campus, or clinic. Members of Congress especially need to see first-hand what you do, in order to understand who you are.
- Organize health fairs, luncheons, ice cream socials and other special events for government officials.
- Schedule visits with hospital administrators and rehab directors to leverage the vital role of athletic trainers in these settings. Use the resources on the CAN-WORC reimbursement page to help explain the value of athletic trainers. Go to <http://www.nata.org/members1/CANWORC/index.cfm> for resources.
- Meet with local legislators to heighten awareness of the athletic training profession.
- Invite federal, state and local legislators to attend NATM events in your community.
- It is very important to work with your state association's governmental affairs committee chair to augment similar efforts. Find a list on the last page of this document.
- Conduct outreach to state medical societies and other allied health care professions to build a coalition of groups that will assist you in current and future legislative and PR efforts. Building long-term partnerships can strengthen your public position for years to come. It is very important that the athletic training state leaders be included in this effort.
- If you need help in planning a day at the state capitol, check with government affairs committee members from states, such as Massachusetts, Illinois and Missouri, who have conducted successful programs in the past; or log on to http://www.nata.org/members1/gov_affairs/toolkit/index.cfm for NATA's Legislative Toolkit.

Build relationships with local and state professional groups:

- Contact state medical and allied health societies, insurance companies, workers' comp providers and influential employer groups to educate them on the real work of athletic trainers. Why? Because these groups are potential political allies and employers who can help assure patient access to athletic trainers. This step is more important than ever to help correct misinformation spread by the Mitchell Report. Your state leaders must be included to ensure a coordinated effort.
- Set up meetings with school boards and administrators to reinforce the vital role athletic trainers have in maintaining the health and wellness of patients and clients in the secondary school setting. Prepare material that demonstrates the unique qualifications of athletic trainers and the wide variety of industries in which they work. Visit <http://www.nata.org/employers/index.htm> to download fliers and PowerPoints available for your use: The "Secondary School Value Model" is particularly useful.
- Target HR directors from select corporations/businesses in your community. Communicate the value of having athletic trainers on-site, and illustrate how they offer a terrific return on investment, boost productivity, and help get employees back to work quickly, effectively and safely. Order NATA brochures and reprints at http://www.nata.org/downloads/documents/305_Brochure-Video_Order_Form.pdf.



Make the most of National Athletic Training Month continued ...

Community activities:

- E-mail or fax information about local NATM events to members of local organizations, health care facilities and government offices — and specifically public health, Medicaid/Medicare, workers' comp and insurance commissioner offices.
- Organize charity races, volleyball tournaments, food drives, health fairs and other high-profile events, and donate proceeds to local groups. Set up information booths and insert athletic training materials inside registration packets.
- Create NATM flyers for display at local medical facilities, health fairs, corporate sites and schools.
- Design and prepare billboards for display along major roads.
- Set up multimedia displays at shopping centers and distribute athletic training information. Arrange for athletic trainer messages to be posted on local business marquees.
- Develop creative material addressing time changes and clocks "springing forward" in March. Tips could include preparing for daylight savings time and even time zone changes for those who participate on travel teams or other activities.
- Contact local professional sports teams to explore potential partnerships to promote NATM at March sporting events.
- During halftime at high school and college sporting events, recognize local athletic trainer efforts over the loudspeaker and on scoreboards.
- Work with wellness centers to offer free injury screenings.
- Host a luncheon with school administrators, health care administrators, rehab directors and physicians, and invite a local certified athletic trainer to be the keynote speaker.
- Arrange to give multimedia presentations before local civic, professional, health care and education groups. Ask them to support athletic trainer legislation and access by patients of all ages.
- Send athletic trainer volunteers to staff telephones at local PBS television fundraising drives, in exchange for airtime, in order to promote the athletic training profession.

Student & parent outreach:

- Send a letter to parents outlining your educational background, role and responsibility to the students. Give parents a call to action: ask them to write their members of Congress to support H.R. 1846, the Medicare Access to Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Services Improvement Act. Sample letters can be found at: http://www.nata.org/members1/gov_affairs/access_act/index.cfm.
- Promote NATM to booster clubs, PTA local chapters and other parent groups. Don't forget youth leagues, park/recreation boards and sports performance enhancement and wellness clinics. Explore possible speaking opportunities with each group.
- Host health career nights for students and their parents to educate them about the athletic training profession. Explain your qualifications, and talk about why you are ideally suited to care for the students' health care needs. Use the Secondary School Value Model PowerPoint; provide take-home information packets.
- Host career workshops, seminars and assemblies for high school and junior college students who are considering athletic training as a career.
- Sponsor contests for students to design posters, Web sites, videos and Internet blogs about NATM.
- Organize a silent auction to raise scholarship funds for a deserving athletic training student.



Make the most of National Athletic Training Month continued ...

Workplace efforts:

- Change your voicemail greeting to include the message: “March is National Athletic Training Month,” and answer your phones in the same manner.
- Include “March is National Athletic Training Month” and the special NATM logo (<http://www.nata.org/natm/logos.htm>) below your signature line on all e-mails you send.
- Set up an exhibit booth at your workplace with athletic training information.
- Work with your employer’s communications personnel to have NATM information printed in game-day programs, company newsletters and Web sites.
- For those employed in clinical or corporate settings, meet one-on-one with your human resources vice president or CEO to explain why athletic trainers are unique health care employees who save money for the company. Make sure they understand why you are valuable to them and that you are not a personal trainer providing fitness services (unless you are).
- Invite your administrators to do a site visit to see what you do.
- Ask your employer to sponsor an athletic trainer recognition day.
- Design a special Web page highlighting events for NATM.

Tips to motivate the media:

- Prepare a press kit that includes athletic training information, NATA/state association fact sheets and information on local NATM events. Visit these sites for general resources: <http://www.nata.org/employers/index.htm> and www.nata.org/natm.
- Send news releases and press kits about local events to daily and weekly newspaper reporters and calendar listings editors, and follow up with them regularly.
- Customize NATA’s national news releases by adding quotes from local athletic trainers and tailoring them to reflect your area.
- Invite local radio and television health and sports reporters and producers to create segments about the value of athletic trainers — and offer to be a resource for the segments. Encourage them to produce call-in shows where athletic trainers can provide important health and wellness information and answer timely questions. Also invite them to your special events.
- Contact media to immediately and politely clarify and correct terminology — especially if they confuse “athletic trainers” with “personal trainers” or “trainers.”
- Write 15- and 30-second radio and TV public service announcements, and urge local stations to run them during March.
- Invite members of the media to tour your facility — a first-hand look will help them understand your role as a health care professional.
- Contact your local business news editors and producers about assigning a story on athletic training.
- Write an article or letter to the editor on how athletic trainers help others be active and stay healthy, and submit it to your local newspaper or employee newsletter.
- Develop print advertisements for local newspapers.
- Distribute links to NATA videos to expand interest.

PR tools at your disposal: ✓

NATA has outlined some useful PR recommendations that will help you promote NATM in your local community. Visit www.nata.org/natm, to find samples and step-by-step tips on how to write a news release, public address and public service announcements (PSAs) and government proclamations. In addition, you'll find the NATM logo, electronic greeting card, NATA video links, as well as information on how to order NATA brochures and videos. Order them early to be assured you'll have them in time. Visit www.nata.org for more details, or contact Charlane Rashaw at charlaner@nata.org, (800) 879-6282, ext. 115.

NATA official key messages: ✓

1. The National Athletic Trainers' Association represents professionals who specialize in the prevention, assessment, treatment and rehabilitation of injuries and illnesses.

The new official definition, as approved by the board of directors, is:
Athletic training is practiced by athletic trainers: health care professionals who collaborate with physicians to optimize activity and participation of patients and clients. Athletic training encompasses the prevention, diagnosis, and intervention of emergency, acute, and chronic medical conditions involving impairment, functional limitations and disabilities.
2. Athletic training is an allied health care profession. Certified athletic trainers hold at least a bachelor's degree and are focused on injury prevention, assessment, treatment and rehabilitation. They are required to pursue continuing education to retain their certification, which is awarded by an organization independent of NATA.
3. Athletic trainers provide value and a financial return on investment to secondary schools, occupational employers, physicians, hospitals and clinics. Their emphasis on injury prevention, assessment, treatment and rehabilitation improves employee productivity and performance that can result in lower liability and health care insurance costs.
4. Athletic trainers are medical professionals who are experts in injury prevention, assessment, treatment and rehabilitation, particularly in the orthopedic and musculoskeletal disciplines.
5. Athletic trainers are a key component of the health care team, which includes physicians and other allied health personnel. Because of their focus on injury prevention, assessment, treatment and rehabilitation, certified athletic trainers can ease the burden on public and private health care systems.
6. NATA is spoken as letters N - A - T - A (not pronounced like the word, "data").
7. Athletic trainers have introduced federal legislation that will allow them to work with physicians to treat Medicare patients for musculoskeletal injuries. H.R. 1846, the Medicare Access to Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Services Improvement Act will allow Medicare beneficiaries to access the services of athletic trainers, who are qualified, licensed and certified therapy providers.
8. Priority legislative messages depend on the specifics of pending state legislation. For assistance in developing state legislative messages, contact Judy Pulice at judyp@nata.org, (800) 879-6282 ext. 103.
9. Athletic trainers differ from personal trainers or "trainers" who focus solely on fitness and conditioning. Athletic trainers have higher educational and certification requirements than personal trainers.
10. About 42 percent of public high schools have access to athletic trainers. With the growing numbers of students participating in sports, it is critical that school districts provide adequate injury prevention, assessment and treatment support just as they provide coaching support.

Need help? ✓

Contact your NATA representatives from the Public Relations (PR) and Governmental Affairs (GAC) Committees:

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