

03/17/05 - Urgent Legislative Information – Immediate Action Required.

The Minnesota Board of Physical Therapy is introducing a bill that would affect the practice of athletic trainers within the physical therapy setting. This bill is being introduced on the house floor on March 17, 2005. The Minnesota Athletic Trainers' Association is opposed to this legislation and requests that the members help voice opposition to this bill in its current form. Your immediate action is required.

The MATA views this proposal as a sincere attempt to codify the current practice today wherein athletic trainers work in physical therapy environments and are supervised by physical therapists. Unfortunately, we find the mechanisms in the bill to be unnecessarily burdensome and fear it will create obstacles to the very working relationship it appears to endorse.

The MATA must address a precedent in the bill that we find problematic. To classify athletic trainers with PT assistants and PT aides, who have significantly less education and training, is incorrect. In addition, the philosophy and approach athletic trainers use in handling rehabilitation is different from that of assistants and aides. With that provision in the bill, we could not support it. Further objection comes from how direct supervision is defined within the bill that is more restrictive than supervision of a physical therapy assistant or student physical therapist.

Section 8 of the bill creates a bureaucracy. The process of filing of protocols is overly burdensome and not necessary. Subdivision 3, 4, 5 and 6 are already documented in patient charts and do not require legislation.

The MATA feels that this bill will cause decrease in patient access and choice in quality healthcare. Athletic trainers are currently regulated under the Minnesota Athletic Trainers' Act and do not require further regulation as is written currently as it offers no further protection to the healthcare client and general public. It is felt that it would further divide the health care team.

We encourage the members of the MATA to speak with their representatives and ask them to oppose this legislation in its current form.

Sincerely;

Paul Bruning, President MN Athletic Trainer Association