

## MARCH IS NATIONAL ATHLETIC TRAINING MONTH: FIVE THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT ATHLETIC TRAINERS

### *National Athletic Training Month Launches with 'ATs Impact Health Care Through Action' Theme*

March is **National Athletic Training Month**, an opportunity to spread awareness of the impact athletic trainers (ATs) have on work, life and sport. Athletic trainers are health care professionals that prevent, diagnose, treat and rehabilitate injuries for active people in many industries, including sports, military and clinical practice.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment of athletic trainers is projected to grow 23 percent from 2016 to 2026, which is significantly faster than the average for all occupations. Reasons for this include people becoming more aware of sports-related injuries and an active aging population that may need additional support. Here are five things you should know about athletic trainers.

- 1. They are health care professionals.** ATs work with individuals who are physically active or involved in sports participation through all stages of life. They prevent, treat and rehabilitate musculoskeletal injuries as well as sports and work-related illnesses and medical conditions. They offer a continuum of care unparalleled in health care and practice under the direction of and in collaboration with physicians. Athletic trainers abide by HIPAA and FERPA laws, and are recognized as allied health care professionals by the American Medical Association, Health Resources Services Administration and the Department of Health and Human Services.
- 2. The welfare of patients is their top priority.** Athletic trainers work with patients to prevent injuries. If a patient is injured, they work with physicians to provide care and rehabilitate the patient back to life before the injury as fast and as safely as possible. Brain and spinal cord injuries and conditions such as heat illness can be life-threatening if not recognized and properly handled. Athletic trainers are there to immediately address emergencies.
- 3. Taping and ice is a small part of what athletic trainers do.** Athletic trainers also coordinate and execute injury prevention programs, prepare athletes for practices and games, communicate with physicians about injuries, treat and rehabilitate injured players, help determine return to play for injured athletes, monitor environment and weather conditions, develop and execute emergency action plans and are first responders on the scene.
- 4. Education is a huge part of becoming an athletic trainer.** Academic curriculum and clinical training for athletic trainers follow the medical model. They must have a minimum of a four-year degree from a CAATE-accredited program and be certified by the Board of Certification (BOC) through an exam. More than 70 percent of athletic trainers have surpassed the minimum requirement and have earned a master's degree. By 2020, all CAATE-accredited programs will be offered at the master's level only. Every two years, athletic trainers are required to complete Continuing Education Units (CEUs) to maintain their athletic training certification with the BOC.
- 5. They work in more settings than sports.** The duties of many workers – such as baggage handlers, dancers, soldiers and police officers – require range of motion and strength and stamina, and hold the potential for musculoskeletal injuries. ATs work with individuals in a variety of settings – including Fortune 100 companies – to help prevent, diagnose and treat injuries.