

ATHLETIC TRAINERS AS A PIECE OF THE ASTHMA EDUCATION PUZZLE

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Athletic training is an allied health care profession recognized by the American Medical Association (AMA), Health Resources Services Administration (HRSA) and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Athletic trainers work in a variety of settings, including secondary schools. A 2015 published report showed 70% of US high schools have athletic training services and 30% of the high schools employ an athletic trainer full time. To become an athletic trainer, an individual needs to graduate with a bachelor's degree from an education program approved by the Commission of Accreditation of Athletic Training Education (CAATE) and pass a national certification exam delivered by the Board of Certification. By 2022 all entry level Athletic Training education programs will have transitioned from the Bachelor's degree to the Master's degree. Using a medical-based education model, athletic trainers receive formal instruction in the following areas: Evidence-based practice, Prevention and health promotion, Clinical examination and diagnosis, Acute care of injury and illness, Therapeutic interventions, Psychosocial strategies and referral, Health care administration, and Professional development and responsibility. Athletic Training curricular content specific to asthma education and management includes: respiratory anatomy / physiology, emergency management of acute asthma exacerbations, lung auscultation, peak flow meter assessment, MDI technique, chronic disease, asthma drug pharmacology, and seasonal / persistent allergies. With this background, the athletic trainer is well positioned to provide asthma education either alone or as part of an education delivery team. The role of the athletic trainer as an asthma educator for students, staff, administrators and parents is a new concept. As asthma continues to be a significant public health issue, the addition of more health care providers, such as athletic trainers, to the asthma education workforce will be critical to solving the asthma education puzzle.