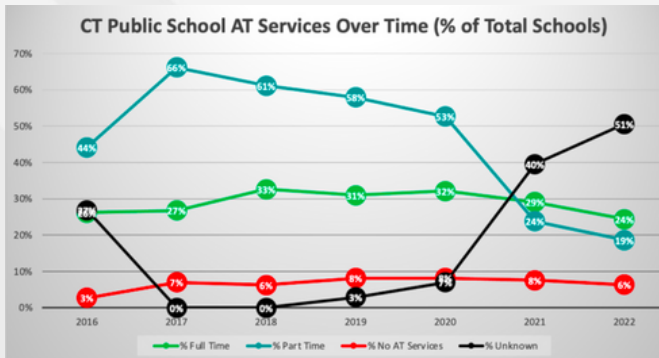


Who is caring for your student-athletes?

The Pivotal State of Athletic Training in Connecticut

Athletic Trainers are healthcare providers certified in the prevention, evaluation, treatment, and rehabilitation of injuries, as well as, our main risk management experts for all athletics. It is standard and best practice to have an Athletic Trainer part of your community for these reasons and more; so you should see them in every school district, right? If you go to a handful of games on any given day, you will notice athletes not being taken care of by a qualified health professional at game time. If you walk across a campus on any regular school day during practice times, you will see even less - even considering that over 62% of injuries happen on the practice field. Schools that have had coverage in the past are scrambling. Companies who hold athletic training service contracts, have dropped multiple due to not having the ability to fill the position. So where is the problem, and what steps do you take to ensure your student-athletes are safe?

What is our current state of ATs in CT?



This graphs show the decrease of athletic trainers in the state from 2016 to 2022 from data collected through the ATLAS project. The ATLAS project is a national data collection overseen by Korey Stringer Institute to evaluate the athletic training services provided to secondary schools across the country.

What does it mean?

So we see the trend of work-life balance struggle, more hours, more education requirements, increased liability, increased documentation and coordination, and others - but we are not seeing the increase in pay for this profession and specific setting like we do with other professions or even outside the secondary school setting. This is causing more athletic trainers to move on from the current school they are in, switch settings, or move on the profession all together. One CT athletic trainer that saved a life at their previous school, moved on to the industrial setting making just about double the salary. Multiple athletic trainers that were at secondary schools last year, left the profession entirely to provide for themselves and their families.

What Can you do?

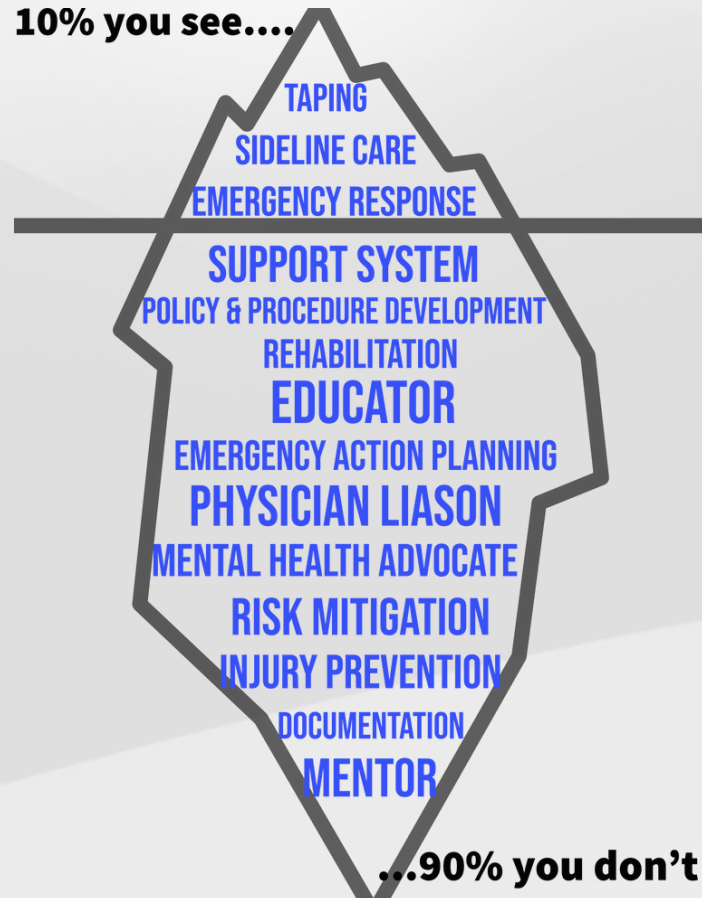
Once these factors are taken to the table, the conclusion and solution for some schools becomes very apparent - talk to the athletic trainer, talk with all stakeholders, take all the responsibilities of the "job" into account, create a position that provides quality care for student-athletes and balance, and create the budget to provide a respectful salary that correlates with all of the areas of impact. There are reasons beyond the control of the school that include the degree shift leading to fewer bodies, athletic trainers that have left the profession, among others. So if the athletic trainer is valued, control the circumstances that you are able to, or the athletic training numbers will continue to decline. There is no budget that can afford to not take into account the student-athletes' lives put at risk due to lack of medical coverage and the scary amount of implications if we do not do what is possible to change this curve.

Why?

- Work life balance challenges with hectic athletic schedule
- Choice of multiple practice settings
- Salary compared to other settings & across the state drastically change (+-\$10-50,000)
- Value, respect, & support in decision making
- Lack of comprehensive understanding of Athletic Training services & demands by stakeholders
- Increase of liability
- Change in education from bachelors to masters & doctorate
- Variable care of the Athletic Trainer in current out reach models

The Iceberg of Athletic Training

10% you see....



Who is caring for your student-athletes?

The Pivotal State of Athletic Training in Connecticut

The personal story of the Athletic Trainer that saved Connecticut high school quarterback

On what should have been an ordinary light-hearted football game in the fall of 2022 turned to a life-changing and life-saving event that displayed the training & skill of the Athletic Trainer; and why every sideline needs to have one, along with an AED.

Tyler McCarthy is an Athletic Trainer for Woodstock Academy and in the pivotal moment when his senior quarterback collapsed from cardiac arrest, he and the home team Athletic Trainer Brittany Verge, adhered to the call that they were simply trained to do. Tyler quickly recognized that the student-athlete did not have a pulse, activated his emergency action plan, removed the athletes clothing/gear, and began CPR. Brittany ran to help with the AED and with the help of EMTs and team physicians, the athlete left the field for the hospital in stable condition. After vast testing and evaluation it was found that the athlete had an undiagnosed heart condition causing cardiac injury and eventually cardiac arrest. The surgeons and doctors explained to the parents of the student-athlete what they knew to be true - had there not been swift recognition and action by the Athletic Trainer, this would not have been a happy ending. *"Tyler was the calm in the chaos...our son is going to graduate high school, had Tyler not been there, this would be a different story"* -Bobbi Jo Saucier



Administrators of Woodstock Academy and Family of the student-athlete help CATA president Stephen Straub present Tyler with the CATA Presidents Award.

The clock stopped that night and the game ended. The football team only came together the next day to heal together. What did Tyler do the next day? He went back to work - to another sideline; because that is the nature of the job. He cares for all student-athletes and all sports, with the same dedication as the night before. He would check back in and visit the family that live close on campus as they all learned more about the why of the athletes condition and the how to moving forward.

But there was moving forward, because it went right that night. The emergency action plan worked, the training and skills were executed, the collaboration between medical professionals and bystanders were like routine, and the inspiration of a high school quarterback moving forward through adversity persevered.

What is left is gratitude. Gratitude for the education and skill Athletic Training school gave Tyler, gratitude to Tyler and Brittany for adhering to the call, gratitude that the stakeholders of Woodstock Academy & Enfield high school value the Athletic Trainer role to have one present, gratitude that the teenage life continues, and the list will continue.

I think athletic training needs to be priority...I think right now schools are facing budget cuts, and sometimes we think some of the other staff that are a priority. And I think being an athletic trainer and a nurse myself, I understand and value the importance of health care..But athletic training coverage needs to be in every single high school, and I would say in every athletic field as well.

What is the take-home message. There are many but for here it is to ensure that every sidelines has an Athletic Trainer and AED present so that the outcome can be hopeful and similar as it was that day. Scary to think that there were football games this fall that did not have an Athletic Trainer present.

Do you know who is on your sidelines taking care of student-athletes for the day-to-day operations & prepared for all the "what ifs"?

resources on Athletic Training best practices, strategies to hire an Athletic Trainer, and ensure you have the best program in place:

www.atyourownrisk.org
www.nata.org
www.ctathletictrainers.org
www.ksi.uconn.edu

watch full video on the story and award presentation by clicking on the QR code:

Reach out to CT Athletic Trainers Association to talk about your community goals & strategize how to get there



CATASecSchools@gmail.com