

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE *UNHERALDED HERO*



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By now we have all seen them on television. An athlete gets hurt on the playing field and a couple members of the support staff hurry onto the field to attend to the injured athlete, and someone in the room questions, “who are those people?”. “Those are the Athletic Trainers,” someone else responds. They know their titles, but often don’t know the complete scope of what an Athletic Trainer is or does. So that raises the question, “Who are Athletic Trainers?”.

Athletic Trainers are healthcare professionals who are multi-skilled and are highly qualified to treat and service their clientele based on their education and in accordance with state’s rules and regulations under the direction of a physician. These services include injury and illness prevention, emergent care, examination and clinical diagnosis, coordination with other healthcare professionals and facilitation of care, rehabilitation and therapeutic intervention, as well as overall wellness education and promotion. To carry the title of Athletic Trainer, one has to have been educated in an academic curriculum and clinical training consistent with the medical model of education. After this education is completed, the individual must pass their state’s regulatory process to be able to practice as an Athletic Trainer. Many Athletic Trainers have also passed the Board of Certification examination to become nationally certified as well. Each state has their own rules and regulations regarding Athletic Trainers and the

statutes they must abide by to practice. Athletic Training is recognized by the American Medical Association as a healthcare profession.

Athletic Trainers can render medical services not only to athletes participating in sports, but to all types of patients as well as in a wide variety of job settings. Also, during the current state of workforce conditions, Athletic Trainers have even expanded their reach. They can be seen in the clinical setting assisting in support for physicians as well as providing continuing care in the outpatient rehabilitation settings. Athletic Trainers can also be found assisting those same physicians in other hospital based settings. These healthcare professionals can be found in the industrial setting as well educating workers on preventative care techniques, injury prevention, and rehabilitating workplace injuries to decrease absenteeism to lower health care costs for the organization. Providing these types of attributes to an organization, a positive outcome can be a result and return on investment is achieved.

This is a basic knowledge of what an Athletic Trainer is and does. So now you know who those people are that run on the field when an athlete gets hurt. Next time at your local gameday watch party or while sitting in the crowd and someone asks the question, “I wonder who those people are?”, you can calmly give an educated explanation of who those Athletic Trainers are and what they can do.