



CAATE

Commission on Accreditation
of Athletic Training Education

February 11, 2020

To Whom It May Concern:

The Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education (CAATE) appreciates the opportunity to provide comment regarding the proposed changes to the Act: Health Occupations - Athletic Training - Revisions (HB 576). We will limit our points to the educational preparation of the athletic trainers (AT) as others will be addressing the credentialing of the AT.

The CAATE is the sole accreditor for 367 professional, post-professional, and residency athletic training education programs in the U.S. and is recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). Since 2004, all candidates for the athletic training Board of Certification examination must have graduated from a CAATE accredited program.

We support the proposed language changes as we have concerns that the current language restricts the athletic trainer's ability to practice both in terms of location and the population of patients they can serve. In addition, the current language also defines where an athletic training student can gain clinical education experiences under the supervision of an athletic trainer to particular settings and only with "individuals who participate in an athletic activity." This limits the students' educational experience and could pose a significant hardship for an Athletic Training program in demonstrating compliance with our accreditation standards as students would need to complete a portion of their clinical education outside of the state of Maryland.

There are currently three universities in Maryland that house a CAATE-accredited athletic training program. To maintain this accreditation, programs must maintain compliance with all accreditation standards. Several standards would be difficult to meet if the clinical experiences available to students were limited to the settings in the current law and/or only have patient interactions with "athletes" as defined in the current statute. Programs would have to send their students outside of the state of Maryland for a portion of their clinical education to meet the accreditation standards.

For example, Standard 17 requires: "A program's clinical education component is planned to include clinical practice opportunities with **varied client/patient populations. Populations must include clients/patients**

- **throughout the lifespan (for example, pediatric, adult, elderly),**
- of different sexes,
- with different socioeconomic statuses,
- of varying levels of activity and athletic ability (for example, competitive and recreational, individual and team activities, high- and low-intensity activities),
- **who participate in nonsport activities (for example, participants in military, industrial, occupational, leisure activities, performing arts)."**

In addition, the CAATE Accreditation Standards require athletic training programs to teach Core Competencies related to Patient-Centered Care and Inter-professional practice. Three, in particular, would be very difficult to do if the student's clinical experiences were limited to educational institutions, professional sports, and amateur sports.

1. Standard 56 requires students to learn to: “Advocate for the health needs of clients, patients, communities, and populations.
Annotation: Advocacy encompasses activities that promote health and access to **health care for individuals, communities, and the larger public.**”
2. Standard 59 requires that students learn to: “Communicate effectively and appropriately with clients/patients, family members, coaches, administrators, other health care professionals, consumers, payors, policy makers, and others.”
3. Standard 61 requires that students: “Practice in collaboration with other health care and wellness professionals.”

In May of 2015, the athletic training profession announced that baccalaureate programs may not admit, enroll, or matriculate students into the athletic training program after the start of the fall term 2022. After that time, the minimum degree for board exam eligibility and entry into the athletic training profession will be a master’s degree. However, many programs have already transitioned to the master’s degree level, including one of the three programs in Maryland.

Standard 2 states:

CAATE accredited professional athletic training programs must lead to the granting of a master’s degree in Athletic Training. The program must be identified as an academic athletic training degree in institutional academic publications. The degree must appear on the official transcript similar to normal designations for other degrees at the institution. (Baccalaureate programs may not admit, enroll, or matriculate students into the athletic training program after the start of the fall term 2022).

This degree change is, in part, due to the increased content delivered in athletic training educational programs as the profession has evolved over the past several years. The CAATE Accreditation Standards and the required educational content are periodically updated to standardize interprofessional education, full-time clinical education, and incorporation of a blend of core health professions competencies originally articulated by the Institute of Medicine (now the National Academy of Medicine) and the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education. These revisions further reflect that athletic trainers are comparably educated to our health care peers and are integral members of the health care team.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on this proposed legislation. We hope that this information is helpful in your deliberations.

Sincerely,



Eric Sauers, PhD, ATC, FNATA
CAATE President