

February 18, 2020

The Honorable Shane E. Pendergrass  
Chair, House Health and Government Operations Committee  
241 House Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: **SUPPORT HB 576** – Health Occupations Athletic Training – Revisions

Dear Chair Pendergrass,

Good morning madam chair, Vice Chair and members of the committee

I am Ed Strapp the government affairs chairman for the Maryland Athletic Trainers' Association. I am here in support of HB 576. This legislation has become a passion of mine since under current guidelines I can't even provide high quality medical care to my own coworkers on the Maryland state police.

Why are we here, our goal of this legislation is to remove antiquated language and undue restrictions of a defined patient population and limited workplace setting which Athletic trainers in the state of Maryland are bound by. We are the only health care provider that are limited by a defined patient population and then restricted to a limited workplace setting. It is this reason that we're here in front of you today with house bill 576.

A name does not doesn't define a profession. A name may be historically significant and describe where they cut their proverbial teeth but over time their education and training are what defines a profession. Athletic training was born on the sidelines, but former athletes, and many other “consumers” has realized that the sports medicine model allows an athletic trainer to provide high quality care in a wide variety of settings

I would like to address a few points which you have likely here from the APTA-MD. They brought several concerns to multiple legislators very early in this 2020 legislative session. So, Delegate Lewis-Young asked us all to meet. During this meeting they told us “we are here to listen” and numerous times we heard “I haven’t talked to my client yet” when asked about concerns they had. We are willing to work with any group that has a vested interest in open dialog and advancing practice not squashing the opponent. Just yesterday the APTA of MD presented us with 6 amendments. Several changed current language, some went against policy by redefining terms with clear definitions, and also contradictory or circular language about workplace and job function. This isn’t compromise, this is strong arming and repressing. What makes the PTs gate keepers? The physician of the MOA supports

this bill. Pivot, ATI, Briotix, 3 of the largest PT organization in the region and county who all have very large industrial AT programs, SUPPORT this legislation.

So, I have told you our goal, remove restrictions to patient populations and workplace settings. And let me tell you what we are not seeking:

We are not seeking to change our physician oversight, this is a cornerstone with athletic training around the county, at all levels. We are part of a healthcare team and we have physician oversight which has been in place since initial licensure and continues moving forward.

We are not seeking to move out from the Maryland Board of Physician, they will continue to establish practice standards and scope of practice and they do with numerous other health occupations. They approve all Evaluation and Treatment protocols which clearly define the skills and AT can do, the skills they CAN NOT DO, and they evaluation any specialty skill an AT seeks permission with clear educational competencies.

We are not changing what is a clearly established Scope of Practice. We have added terms for clarity to skills and tasks which an athletic trainer already completes to match the Maryland Practice act with nationally accepted model language for the profession of Athletic Training. Where you perform skills and WHO you perform them on does not change scope of practice? the body doesn't know, or the physiology of a body does not change based on where you work, what you do for a living or how you were injured.

This bill does not mandate anyone hire an Athletic Trainer; it gives them the option. This bill does not mandate who an injured person uses for medical care, that is clearly forbidden in local and national standards.

This bill allows for a consumer driven model for providing the best access to health care for their athletes, employees and self.

It is not the legislator's responsibility to choose a winner or a loser, we ask that you create a level playing field to allow for the best access to healthcare. We ask you allow for the consumer to create demand, and therefore increase jobs.

While I can play the what if game all day long, we are here today to allow athletic trainers trainers provide high quality medical care in the guidance of their education and training standards and that is all we are seeking to do. By remove the restrictions to patient population and workplace settings because those really have no impact on injuries illnesses, medical conditions or care, you allow trained health care providers to recognized and handle

these injuries. That is why I seek your support on behalf the Maryland Athletic Trainers' Association for house bill 576.

Respectfully,

*Edward Strapp*

Edward J. Strapp, FP-C, NRP, LAT, ATC  
Government Affairs Chairman  
Maryland Athletic Trainers Association