



Bill: HB 0935 Public Schools - Venue-Specific Emergency Action Plans - High School Football Games

Letter of Information

Dear Chair, Vice-Chair, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Maryland Athletic Trainers' Association (MATA), we offer the following letter of information, and we appreciate the Sponsor's willingness to meet.

MATA appreciates the intent of House Bill 935, which aims to ensure the presence of appropriate healthcare during high school football games by requiring either a licensed athletic trainer or an ambulance staffed with emergency medical personnel on-site. MATA fully supports the idea that appropriate healthcare at sporting events, especially at the high school level, is critical for the safety and well-being of athletes. However, there are several areas within the bill that require further consideration to improve its effectiveness and overall impact.

Key Areas for Consideration:

1. Expanded Coverage Across All Sports:

MATA strongly advocates for expanding these requirements to include other high-risk sports, such as lacrosse, soccer, and field hockey, where injuries are also prevalent. Ensuring athletic trainers or emergency medical staff are present at all sports events can prevent potentially life-threatening situations from going untreated.

2. Qualified Personnel:

While the bill specifically addresses either a Licensed Athletic Trainer or an ambulance with the appropriate emergency medical services personnel, this leaves a wide gap in understanding. The scope of practice between Licensed Athletic Trainers and Emergency Medical Services providers is significant in a wide variety of areas, so as the intent of the bill is focused on providing care, there is a great difference which needs to be addressed. Two big areas would be return to play decisions after an injury, and rapid transport in a critically injured athlete.

3. Funding and Resource Allocation:

One of our primary concerns is the potential financial burden on schools, particularly those in lower-income areas, to comply with the bill's requirements. The costs of hiring licensed athletic trainers and maintaining dedicated ambulances on-site for every game can be substantial. Additionally, each counties Emergency Medical Services availability may not be able to support the added demands on the system and would require schools to hire private ambulance services for event coverage at an unknown and potentially significant amount. Therefore, we encourage the legislature to explore funding solutions or grants to help schools meet these new requirements without straining their budgets.



conclusion, MATA recognizes the importance of this bill in promoting athlete safety, and we believe that with the suggested enhancements, it can better serve all student-athletes across Maryland.

Thank you for considering our input. We look forward to collaborating on this critical issue.

Jane McClean, MSHA, LAT, ATC, CEIS
Government Affairs Committee Chair
Maryland Athletic Trainers' Association