

March 1, 2011

Public Health Committee
Room 3000
Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106

Senator Gerratana, Representatives Ritter and Ackert and honorable members of the Public Health Committee as a constituent of Coventry, CT and a member of the Connecticut Athletic Trainers Association I want to sincerely thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of SB 1051 "An Act Concerning the Practice of Athletic Training".

As a licensed certified athletic trainer for over 15 years I have witnessed the Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education (CAATE) in conjunction with the Board of Certification (BOC) and the National Athletic Trainers Association (NATA) work to revise the Educational Competencies to its current and newest fifth edition. As someone who has taught undergraduate athletic training students I understand the impact that the current limited practice act language has on student retention in the state. Under the current practice act athletic trainers are limited to working in what has been called 'traditional athletic' environments. However the athletic training profession has evolved so that nationally athletic trainers are also working in 'non-traditional' environments.

SB 1051 would update the athletic training practice act to reflect changes that have occurred as part of the natural evolution of the profession, as well as changes in current practice nationally. Although athletic trainers have traditionally practiced in the college, professional and secondary school settings, the National Athletic Trainers' Association now reports that 50% of the over 32,000 athletic trainers nationally practice in settings other than those traditionally team or school-based environments. Athletic trainers are employed in hospitals and outpatient clinics, physician offices as physician extenders, industrial and occupational settings, law enforcement and public safety, the military, and the performing arts. Companies as diverse as Coca-Cola, Daimler-Chrysler, DuPont, Frito-Lay, General Motors, Johnson & Johnson, and Kodak employ athletic trainers to work with their employees. NASA and the U.S. Navy SEALs, as well as each of the other branches of the U.S. military all employ athletic trainers. Performing arts companies including Cirque du Soleil, Disney World and Disneyland, Radio City Music Hall Rockettes, Cincinnati Ballet and Blue Man Group employ athletic trainers.

There are five athletic training education programs in the state (UConn, SCSU, CCSU, Sacred Heart University, and Quinnipiac University). These students are required to participate in clinical rotations; however this educational experience is limited to traditional settings because the current practice act language limits potential non-traditional educational opportunities. Furthermore students who graduate from these programs presently have a narrow range of employment opportunities in Connecticut due to the limited work settings based on the current practice act. Many athletic training students leave Connecticut for professional opportunities in states that allow a broader job market. Sadly, 58% of all Connecticut athletic training students leave the state resulting in such companies as MeadWestvaco, Pitney Bowes, Xerox, and Stanley Work, Pratt & Whitney, Stanadyne, and International Paper without in-house healthcare providers.

The current practice act in Connecticut either would not allow or would significantly limit an athletic trainer's ability to be employed in many of the settings previously mentioned, because of language that limits the patient population to that of an "athlete". While it is true that athletic trainers are primarily associated with providing care and treatment to athletes, something of which we are very proud; it is also true that an outgrowth

of this work has been to utilize those same skills in other settings to provide similar services to individuals who have active jobs, and to others who may be less active but who sustain the same types of injuries athletic trainers are qualified to and regularly treat in an athletic setting.

The proposed scope of practice changes would allow athletic trainers to practice more closely to the fullest extent of their education and training. These proposed changes would open occupational opportunities in corporations, municipalities, outpatient rehabilitation facilities, hospitals, and a number of other settings including private practice. With this being said I hope that it is clear to you that because of the limited job market for Connecticut athletic training students and athletic training professionals you are able to understand the need to expand the athletic trainer practice act by approving SB 1051 "An Act Concerning the Practice of Athletic Training".

Respectfully,

Carrie Graham

Carrie Graham, MA ATC
745 Merrow Road
Coventry, CT 06238