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**Testimony of Sara D. Brown, MS, ATC (Chair, Standards Committee, Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education) in support of Raised SB 356, AAC Athletic Trainers**

Dear Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter, and Honorable Members of the Public Health Committee,

I am writing to urge you to support Senate Bill 356, "An Act Concerning Athletic Trainers," legislation that would update the athletic training practice act in Connecticut. This change, quite simply, replaces outdated language that has become unintentionally restrictive and limits consumer access to the services of an athletic trainer (AT).

Connecticut's practice act currently allows ATs to treat an individual who is a "...member of any professional, amateur, school or other sports team, or is a regular participant in sports or recreational activities..." Today, however, more than half of the athletic trainers practicing in the United States work in settings and with populations other than "athletes," as defined in current Connecticut law. As you can imagine, in contemporary terms, this language is both confusing and limiting.

I am presently the Chair of the Standards Committee for the national accreditation agency in athletic training education (the Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education [CAATE]) and am leading the project to redefine the education standards. I am the Past President of the Board of Certification (BOC), a national credentialing agency that certifies athletic trainers who practice around the world. Additionally, I recently completed a 4-year term as the chairman of the Executive Committee for Education of the National Athletic Trainers' Association. In this position, I led the development of the competencies that drive our educational practices. I have been the director of Boston University's athletic training program and a licensed athletic trainer in Massachusetts for over 25 years. I am well positioned to describe the educational preparation of athletic trainers and our many skills and abilities.

Education of athletic trainers has kept pace with the healthcare needs of our patients. As more and more patients seek our services, employment settings have expanded far beyond the traditional setting in college and high schools. For example, treating patients in the U.S. Special Forces, physician offices, and outpatient rehabilitation clinics is now common across the United States.

Programs are nationally accredited through the CAATE. A critical feature of each professional program is a minimum of 2 years of clinical experience under the supervision and guidance of a licensed provider. Furthermore, each program must include at minimum content in: prevention and health promotion; clinical examination, diagnosis and treatment of orthopedic and non-orthopedic conditions; acute care of injury and illness; and psychosocial strategies and referral. In other words, athletic trainers are educated to provide care and appropriate referral within the expanding healthcare system.

In May 2015, the CAATE announced that all professional programs in athletic training are required to provide education at the master's degree level, and this change will happen at every program across the United States by 2025. This degree transition serves to acknowledge the increasing demand for athletic trainers to be educated to fully participate in the health care system as the provider of choice for those engaged in physical activity, which includes practice settings in sports, the performing arts, industry, and public safety. In addition to completing an accredited athletic training program, students must pass the Board of Certification (BOC) examination in order to be eligible for a Connecticut license. The BOC exam meets rigorous credentialing standards and is designed using metrics from a Practice Analysis/Role Delineation Study describing the professional practice of athletic trainers. The qualifications of athletic trainers to prevent, manage, and rehabilitate injuries and illnesses in an active population are clear.

Many of the students who enroll in AT education programs discover the profession of athletic training when they get hurt in high school and are impressed by the care they receive from an athletic trainer. Some of you may also have had that experience. Those fortunate enough to participate in collegiate sports also have access to the same great care that focuses on not only return to sport but also on return to all activities that are important to the person. Because of the restrictive language in the current statute, however, these same individuals may not be able to access care from an athletic trainer through any other venue. I ask that this unintentional but real limitation be rectified so that everyone who could benefit from an athletic trainer's services can benefit from an athletic trainer's services.

Sincerely,



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