



Athletic Trainers in Community Outreach

AN EMPLOYMENT MODEL DESIGNED TO MEET DIVERSE HEALTH CARE NEEDS

Athletic trainers (ATs) employed in community outreach programs play a critical role in the provision of medical services to many different patients and bridge the gap between clinics and hospitals and their local community. Athletic training community outreach programs connect patients with health care professionals who are trained in the prevention of injuries and illnesses, risk mitigation, emergency care, examination, assessment and diagnosis of injuries, rehabilitation and administrative duties. Additionally, these programs help increase access and utilization of health care services while reducing overall costs. Community outreach describes an employment model for ATs rather than a specific clinical location. Schools, government entities, companies and organizations that seek to reduce risk and improve population health can work with a local orthopedic or sports medicine clinic or area hospital to develop a contract that establishes full time, part time or event-specific medical care from ATs. This employment model provides numerous benefits to the clinic or hospital, the contracting organization and population receiving care.

About Athletic Trainers



Community outreach programs provide health care for youth sport programs, middle schools and high schools, recreational and intramural sports, colleges and universities, mass sporting events and public safety entities.



Must graduate from an accredited educational program and pass a comprehensive, national certification exam.



Are licensed and otherwise regulated in 49 states and the District of Columbia. Efforts continue to gain regulation in California.



Must keep their knowledge and skills current by participating in continuing education.



In conjunction with the state practice act, the AT's individual education, training and skill set determines their unique scope of practice.

Community Outreach Programs

PROVIDING HEALTH CARE WITH IMPACT



Injury and Illness Prevention and Wellness Promotion

ATs in community outreach programs promote healthy lifestyle behaviors through education and communication to enhance wellness and minimize the risk of injury and illness among many different patient types. In the midst of the pandemic, ATs have been vital in developing, implementing and evaluating safety protocols to mitigate the spread of the virus.



Examination, Assessment and Diagnosis

ATs in community outreach programs provide on-site and evidence based examinations and assessments to formulate valid clinical diagnoses and determine patients' plan of care. This immediate access to health care improves patient outcomes, reduces time away from school or work and minimizes unnecessary trips to the emergency department.



Immediate and Emergency Care

ATs integrate best practices in immediate and emergency care for optimal outcomes. ATs in community outreach programs must be prepared to respond to many types of emergency situations, depending on the patients they are caring for. Some of the types of emergencies that ATs are skilled to respond to include heat illness, fractures and dislocations, cervical spine injuries, and sudden cardiac arrest.



Therapeutic Intervention

ATs employed through community outreach programs rehabilitate and recondition injuries, illnesses and general medical conditions with the goal of achieving optimal activity level using the applications of therapeutic exercise, modality devices and manual techniques. The provision of on-site rehabilitation minimizes time away from work or school for the patient.



Health Care Administration

ATs integrate best practices in policy construction and implementation, documentation and basic business practices to promote optimal patient care and employee well-being. In addition to the policy development, ATs in community outreach programs help manage referrals and play a valuable role as a care coordinator for their patients. In administrative roles, ATs must manage a team of health care providers as well as the contracts and legal requirements for the provision of care across their community.