

State of Connecticut  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY



PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE  
LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING HARTFORD,  
CT 06106-1591

Athletic Trainer Task Force

Meeting Summary

Friday, March 21, 2025

12:00 PM on Zoom and YouTube Live

I. Convene Meeting

- The meeting was convened by Eleni Diakogeorgiu at 12:05 p.m.
- Attendance: Gary Morin, Eleni Diakogeorgiou, Jennifer Tirillo, Andrew Abraham, Robert McKee, Jessica Testani, Dr. Stephanie Arlis-Mayor

II. Review of Task Force Documents created by the Connecticut Athletic Trainers Association (CATA) Executive Board

- Eleni Diakogeorgiou explained that this meeting was mainly a follow up and to prepare for public hearings. She commented that various stakeholders have prepared sample testimonies and documents that they will be able to use for the CATA lobbying day. She mentioned that lobbying day is on March 26<sup>th</sup> from 10:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and invited members to join.
- Jessica Testani explained that she has been working make sure that members have the resources available to be able to speak informatively and advocate. She commented that she has shared with members of the Task Force, as well as members of the public, information where stakeholders can share their viewpoint and they can organize their information.
- Stephanie Arlis-Mayor asked Jessica Testani if they are coordinating efforts to

arrive at the State Capitol on March 26<sup>th</sup>.

- Jessica Testani responded that she can share a social media post that would help people to sign up to be at the Legislative Office Building (LOB), Atrium Second Floor, from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm on March 26<sup>th</sup>.
- Eleni Diakogeorgiou mentioned to members that they would be happy to help in advocating at the LOB.
- Jessica Testani believes that CATA should be able to use funding to be able to attend various larger stakeholder meetings across the State to inform individuals about athletic trainers as well as being able to host a table of stakeholders where athletic trainers can impart who they are. She commented about the need to further publicize the role of athletic trainers. She mentioned that they have attended health fairs to further educate individuals about athletic trainers and the possibility of attracting high school students. She stated that creating a program to attract high school students and educate them would be aspirational. She stated that mentoring students was another conversation that they had. She commented that she wants enhanced communication between athletic trainers and stakeholders as athletics trainers are the last to know in many situations.
- Eleni Diakogeorgiou mentioned that members of the Task Force come from different settings and asked for their perspective.
- Stephanie Arlis-Mayor stated that the Connecticut Academy of Family Medicine will hold a meeting in October and the Connecticut Orthopedic Society will hold a meeting in May and that athletic trainers could attend.
- Andrew Abraham followed up on Jessica Testani comments about enhanced communication between athletic trainers and athletic directors as a way to achieve trust and respect. He stated that newly graduated athletic trainers have difficulty communicating with athletic directors who need to be part of the process to help a new graduate grow. He shared a story where his athletic director showed him respect. This demonstrated that the athletic director understood the role of athletic trainers. He mentioned that he has been approached multiple times to create a sports medicine club in a secondary school setting and would like to see the state grant some funding to help create these clubs. He believes that this is low hanging fruit that the State can invest in.
- Eleni Diakogeorgiou commented that this is an investment and not an immediate return.
- Andrew Abraham responded affirmatively.

- Jessica Testani believes that this is one part, but another is that secondary school students don't know what options are available for athletic trainers and they should expose secondary school students to all areas. She stated that the CATA has visited four out of the five programs in the State and polled students for feedback. She would like to see their programs further publicized as well as seeing more support for students in the programs and graduates. She commented that athletic trainers need more support to help them in their work life balance and that an investment would help fix that balance.
- Jennifer Tirillo asked if large athletic trainer organizations could establish programs to discuss or deal with burn out.
- Jessica Testani shared that CATA would be creating a series of events to deal with mental health and burnout.
- Gary Morin stated that Quinnipiac University dropped their program. He mentioned that the currently, programs are at the University of Connecticut, Connecticut Central State University, Southern Connecticut State University and Sacred Heart University. He stated that most of an athletic trainer's work life balance comes through an athletic director and asked Robert McKee for any suggestions.
- Robert McKee answered that better communication is key and giving the heads up about any changes to the Athletic Trainer is crucial. He stated that athletic directors know when an athletic trainer is needed, and it is up to them to properly schedule them.
- Gary Morin asked Robert McKee what the best approach would be for an athletic trainer to an athletic director.
- Robert McKee answered that introducing yourself and effectively communicating some questions or concerns would be the best approach. He commented that athletic directors then should educate the new athletic trainer about the environment. He believes that everyone gets to that point but believes it requires effective communication. He mentioned that conversation and introductions are key as they facilitate establishing trust and respect.
- Gary Morin thanked Robert McKee.
- Jessica Testani asked Robert McKee what the best ways are to highlight his relationship with athletic trainers.
- Robert McKee responded that athletic trainers should be surveyed to see what affects them most. Then that survey could be shared by athletic directors with leagues to inform them about athletic trainers. He believes that effective communication is paramount in meeting someone new.

- Andrew Abraham asked Robert McKee how they can educate athletic directors best in a group setting.
- Robert McKee responded that they meet once a month and that there should be a simple update about how they are approaching this issue.
- Andrew Abraham asked if the CATA could assist in that, and he believes that there are athletic trainers who would be happy to attend.
- Robert McKee commented that they are open to guests.
- Gary Morin asked Jessica Testani if CATA could assist in that.
- Jessica Testani stated that they could help in that, but it would also require Robert McKee to disseminate that information back to his organization to make sure that everyone is on board. She believes that being in front of more athletic directors is key for athletic trainers and that this effort is done together by both organizations.
- Robert McKee shared that his organization creates a monthly newsletter and CATA could partner with them in this effort.
- Gary Morin asked Jessica Testani to share that her survey is coming from the Task Force.
- Jessica Testani responded affirmatively.
- Eleni Diakogeorgiou agreed with Gary Morin and commented that the newsletter could include reminders about requirements for athletic directors as well to help educate athletic trainers in the role of athletic directors.
- Robert McKee commented that CIAC and his organization team up to educate new athletic directors and athletic trainers could be included in that process.
- Eleni Diakogeorgiou appreciates that comment.
- Jessica Testani stated that it would be good for Connecticut Medical SOCIETY(CMS) and CATA to be included in that newsletter to showcase the relationship between the various stakeholders.
- Stephanie Arlis-Mayor agrees with Jessica Testani about CMS being included in that newsletter. She stated that they do not have a list of team physicians for all the different schools and that she doesn't know how to fill this information gap.
- Robert McKee answered that they have a master spreadsheet of various

contacts and that it includes athletic trainers and he commented that he can share that.

- Stephanie Arlis-Mayor commented that athletic trainers are there, but team doctors are not. She mentioned that she has worked to fill that information gap, but it persists.
- Gary Morin asked if that spreadsheet could include the team doctor or whoever signs the standing orders.
- Stephanie Arlis-Mayor stated that the standing order is signed by the school doctor, not the person covering the games. She stated that they know who the school doctors are but not the team doctors.
- Andrew Abraham shared that in his experience, whoever was signing the standing order had typically a background in sports medicine and had ties to the sidelines. He hopes that model is shifting as it is important for true sport medicine doctors to sign standing orders.
- Eleni Diakogeorgiou stated in the past that board of education doctors had to sign standing orders as well as the sports medicine doctor. She believes that this is also a factor in communication and asked if there could be two lists created where team doctors can report who their athletic trainers are and athletic trainers can report who their team doctors are.
- Stephanie Arlis-Mayor responded affirmatively.
- Eleni Diakogeorgiou believes that this could be another avenue for communication. She added that showcasing the whole team is important as well as getting resources to assist in any initiative.
- Jessica Testani agrees with Eleni Diakogeorgiou as grant funding would allow for these initiatives to be expanded statewide.
- Eleni Diakogeorgiou commented that these initial investments in education and outreach would help assist them to continue this work down the line.
- Andrew Abraham shared that he reached out to the CIAC and that he has not heard back. He appreciates any member that reaches out to them on his behalf. He would like more testimony from individuals disseminated where their lives are made easier by an athletic trainer as the CIAC will host games without athletic trainers.
- Eleni Diakogeorgiou commented that the co-chairs would add more detailed information in the meeting summary. She asked Jennifer Tirillo if she had anything extra to add as she represents the emerging setting piece.

- Jennifer Tirillo shared that they are communicating with stakeholders and that there are stakeholders that need to be more involved. She believes that athletic trainers must advocate for themselves. She stated that there are departments in commercial and industrial settings that deal with wellness and safety and that is another opportunity for athletic trainers to introduce themselves.
- Eleni Diakogeorgiou stated that they could communicate with these organizations to see how to better advertise Athletic Trainers.
- Jennifer Tirillo agrees with Eleni Diakogeorgiou as they could be better attuned to who is doing what.
- Eleni Diakogeorgiou stated that she wanted today's meeting to focus on the education of stakeholders as that is where they ended in the last meeting.
- Gary Morin commented that there is a bill before the legislature introduced by the Governor that deals with waiving licensing fees and that is something that they can advocate to be added to.
- Jennifer Tirillo stated that she heard about a similar bill.
- Gary Morin hopes that it isn't too late and would like their membership to reach out to legislators so that athletic trainers could get added. He commented that there is a bill going through the process that deals with various healthcare professions getting grants and student loan reimbursement and it includes athletic trainers. He stated that the co-chairs will acquire more information about the bill as it currently is too vague. He cautioned the Task Force about any bill being referred to Appropriations as there are fiscal restraints both on the state and federal level.
- Eleni Diakogeorgiou stated that they are asking for further clarification and information as well as keeping the Task Force in the loop. She added that the next steps will include further clarification of definitions and making sure that athletic trainers are included. She asked members that when the meeting summary is sent out that their edits would be greatly appreciated. She reminded members about the legislative lobby day on March 26<sup>th</sup>. She announced that the next meeting will be on April 11<sup>th</sup> at 12:00 pm.

### III. Preparation for Public Hearings

- a. Sign up on Google form.
- b. The CATA Executive Board collects information.

### IV. Review of key items proposed by the task force.

a. Education of Stakeholders & Mentorship

- Grant funds to support mentorship opportunities.

b. Financial & Retention

- Waive or reduce the cost of the CT Licensure fee.
- Student debt loan forgiveness.
- Scholarship funding to increase recruitment to CT Colleges and Universities.
- Incentives to bring professionals to the state.
- Recommendations for the number of athletic trainers at a school based on the “Appropriate Medical Care Guidelines” for the coverage of student-athletes by the National Athletic Trainers’ Association.

V. Next steps

VI. Adjournment

- The meeting adjourned at 1:09 p.m.