

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
BOARD OF MEDICINE

20-001
POLICY NO.

POLICY STATEMENT

MEDICAL ASSESSMENTS BY ATHLETIC TRAINERS

Policy:


Athletic trainers can play a critical role in the health and welfare of sports teams' members. Their training and skills allow them to provide early intervention and treatment when a team member is injured while playing a sport. However their legal scope of practice does not include the ability to make medical diagnoses. Therefore it is important that athletic trainers and members of the public understand what an athletic trainer can do without providing a medical diagnosis. This policy is designed to provide clarity on that issue.

An athletic trainer may provide immediate and emergency care of athletic injuries (17 DCMR §10404.2). In order to do that appropriately, he or she must be able to make a clinical assessment of the person's injuries. It is important to note that a clinical assessment is not a medical diagnosis; the athletic trainer should ensure that the injured person is referred as appropriate for medical follow-up.

The athletic trainer is also able to provide treatment and rehabilitation of athletic injuries within the protocol, recommendations or order of the physician who is providing general supervision, as long as it is within the professional and educational ability of the individual athletic trainer. (17 DCMR §10404.1). To that end the athletic trainer may coordinate a treatment plan, assess progress and discharge the person based on functional status.

Athletic trainers work in partnership with the supervising physician. Both parties should ensure that this partnership fully utilizes the skills, training and scope of practice of the athletic trainer in order for the full benefit of the public.

This policy is effective immediately.



Andrea Anderson, MD, FAAFP
Chairperson
D.C. Board of Medicine

10/23/2020
DATE