



Attorneys at Law

Professional Service Corporation

Suite 2000, Box 82064  
One American Square, Indianapolis, IN 46282  
(317) 633-4884 Fax: (317) 633-4878

**Todd J. Selby**  
E-Mail: [tselby@hallrender.com](mailto:tselby@hallrender.com)  
Direct Dial: 317/977-1440

September 7, 2004

**VIA E-MAIL AND U.S. MAIL**

Ms. Sue Finkam  
Manager, Marketing & Communications  
Indiana Athletic Trainers' Association  
c/o OrthoIndy  
8450 Northwest Boulevard  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46278

Re: Scope of Practice for Athletic Trainers Licensed in the State of Indiana

Dear Ms. Finkam:

Please allow this letter to serve as a follow-up to our recent telephone conversations concerning the scope of practice for athletic trainers ("ATs") licensed in the state of Indiana. Pursuant to your request, what follows is an outline of the statutory requirements regarding ATs and our opinion concerning the allowable scope of practice for ATs.

The Indiana statute governing ATs is found at I.C. 25-5.1. Pursuant to I.C. 25-5.1-3-2, ATs are licensed so long as they meet the qualifications for licensure found at I.C. 25-5.1-3-1. In summary, in order to qualify for licensure as an AT, the prospective AT must comply with the following:

- (1) Complete an application for licensure;
- (2) Pay all application examination and licensure fees;
- (3) Must not have been convicted for a crime that has a direct bearing on the prospective AT's ability to practice;
- (4) Must not have had any disciplinary actions against the applicant or the applicant's license; and,

- (5) Must have received at least a baccalaureate degree from an institution of higher education that meets the academic standards for ATs established by the National Athletic Trainers' Association.

An AT that is issued a license must practice within the parameters of I.C. 25-5.1. The most relevant of these provisions are the definitions of athletic injuries found at I.C. 25-5.1-1-2, the definition of an AT found at I.C. 25-5.1-1-3, and the definition of athletic training found at I.C. 25-5.1-1-4.

As mentioned above, an AT is defined at I.C. 25-5.1-1-3. "Athletic trainer means an individual who is or may be employed by an educational institution, a professional or an amateur athletic organization, an athletic facility, or a health care facility to practice athletic training."

I.C. 25-5.1-1-4 addresses the definition of athletic training as follows:

"Athletic training" means the practice of prevention, recognition, assessment, management, treatment, disposition, and reconditioning of athletic injuries under the direction of a licensed team medical doctor, osteopath, podiatrist, or chiropractor. The term includes the following:

- (1) Practice that may be conducted by an athletic trainer through the use of heat, sound, cold, electricity, exercise, or mechanical devices related to the care and conditioning of athletes.
- (2) The organization and administration of educational programs and athletic facilities.
- (3) The education and the counseling of the public on matters related to athletic training.

In order to be engaged in athletic training, the AT must be treating an athletic injury as defined in I.C. 25-5.1-1-2. This regulation states as follows:

"Athletic injury" refers to an injury sustained by a physically active individual as a result of the individual's participation in:

- (1) An exercise;
- (2) A sport;
- (3) A game; or
- (4) A recreational activity;

requiring physical strength, agility, flexibility, range of motion, speed, or stamina. The term includes any comparable injury that impedes the individual's participation in any of the activities listed in this section.

It is our opinion that a licensed AT engaged in treating athletic injuries has a broad scope of practice. At first glance, it would appear that an AT is limited to the treatment of athletic injuries as stated in I.C. 25-5.1-1-2. This definition appears to limit the treatment of a patient to an injury that impedes the individual's participation in an exercise, sport, game, or recreational

activity. However, I.C. 25-5.1-1-2, which broadens the scope of athletic training, is the provision that states "[t]he term includes any comparable injury that impedes the individual's participation in any of the activities listed in this section." Therefore, the treatment of an athletic injury by an AT is not limited to an exercise, sport, game, or recreational activity but to any comparable injury that would prevent an individual from participating in an exercise, sport, game, or recreational activity. Consequently, the AT is not limited to providing health care services for the enumerated injuries listed in I.C. 25-5.1-1-2.

Additionally, the practice of athletic training at I.C. 25-5.1-1-4 allows the AT to engage in a broad range of activities so long as the AT is treating an athletic injury as listed above in I.C. 25-5.1-1-2. If the AT is acting under the direction of a licensed team medical doctor, osteopath, podiatrist, or chiropractor, the AT is allowed a broader array of activities in which the AT may engage. It should also be noted that if the AT is acting under the direction of the individuals listed in I.C. 25-5.1-1-4, then the AT is not required to be under the direction of any other allied health professional including a licensed physical therapist.

In conclusion, it is our opinion that the practice of an AT is not limited to an individual's participation in an exercise, sport, game or recreational activity and that so long as the AT is acting under the direction of a licensed team medical doctor, osteopath, podiatrist, or chiropractor, the AT may engage in any activity that impedes the individual's ability to participate in an exercise, sport, game, or recreational activity.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the foregoing or any other issues related to this matter, please feel free to contact me. Thank you for the opportunity to assist you and the Indiana Athletic Trainers' Association.

Very truly yours,

HALL, RENDER, KILLIAN, HEATH & LYMAN, P.S.C.

Todd J. Selby