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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Athletic Training Law Promotes Safety

Providence, RI (September 10, 2004) - As the fall sports season begins, the health and safety of all student-athletes in the Ocean State is an important consideration for school administrators, coaches and parents. Rhode Island law governs the scope of practice as well as those who may perform the duties athletic trainers.

The practice of athletic training is a licensed profession in Rhode Island. According to state law, individuals employed or that volunteers to provide services to student-athletes must not be identified in any way as athletic trainers or perform the duties of an athletic trainer unless they possess NATABOC certification and a state license.

A letter from the Rhode Island Board of Athletic Trainers last fall noted that the board's principle concern is the health and safety of student-athletes who are engaged in athletic events, and receiving athletic training by individuals who lack the education and training to render care safely. Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT's), school administrators, nurses, or coaches who make decisions regarding return to play, or render treatment resulting in an athlete's return to play may be practicing in violation of state law.

The state of Massachusetts has a similar athletic training law and last year there were schools that were found to be in violation of the law by hiring non-licensed athletic trainers and allowing them to perform the duties of an athletic trainer.

The Rhode Island Athletic Trainer's Association and its members want to ensure the health and safety of all student-athletes in the state. This notice is a reminder that state law has been enacted to mandate that the most qualified personnel, licensed athletic trainers, are making decisions on the care, treatment and return to play of injured student-athletes. We caution school authorities that allowing unqualified individuals to practice athletic training may not only poses a significant risk to student-athletes, but may be direct violation of explicit Rhode Island Law.

For more information on the Rhode Island Athletic Trainer's practice act or the Rhode Island Athletic Trainers' Association (RIATA) visit our website at www.riathletictrainers.org For additional questions please contact Andy Llaguno, President, RIATA at (401) 874-5230.