

THE CLINICAL IMPRESSION

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN ATHLETIC TRAINERS' ASSOCIATION

OCTOBER 1 | 2026

Vol. 2

Legacy Link: Building Connections Across Generations of Athletic Trainers

What began as an idea to strengthen connections between athletic trainers at different career stages is becoming a lasting part of the Rocky Mountain Athletic Trainers' Association.

Led by RMATA's Emerging and Early Professionals (EEP) Committee, the Legacy Link Mentorship Program connects second-year athletic training students, early professionals within their first six years of certification, and seasoned professionals with seven or more years of experience. The program is built around three principles: guidance, growth, and connection.

Legacy Link moves beyond traditional one-to-one mentorship by creating a triangle of relationships across generations. Emerging professionals gain perspective as they prepare to enter the profession, early professionals receive support while navigating their careers, and seasoned professionals share their experience while learning from newer generations of ATs. This reciprocal approach recognizes that valuable learning occurs at every career stage.

Legacy Link launched during the 2025–26 academic year as a pilot involving the UNC, NAU, and CMU. Starting with three programs allowed the EEP Committee to recruit mentors, establish partnerships, gather feedback, and refine the program. The pilot combined individual mentorship with professional-development opportunities, including career programming, conversations with ATs from different practice settings, and reflection on professional goals.

Following the successful pilot, RMATA has established Legacy Link as a long-term EEP initiative and an investment in relationships that can extend well beyond a single year.

Our first quarterly meeting is **Sunday, October 18, at 5:00 p.m. MDT/4:00 p.m. MST (Arizona)**. We will officially kick off the program and hear from NATA President-elect David Gallegos, who will speak about mentorship and its importance to our profession. As Legacy Link enters its next chapter, RMATA looks forward to bringing emerging, early, and seasoned professionals together to share experiences, build connections, and strengthen athletic training throughout District 7.

Be part of the Legacy. Athletic trainers interested in participating or learning more can contact the RMATA Emerging and Early Professionals Committee at EEP@RMATA.org



SPORTS MEDICINE CENTER



Children's Hospital Colorado



Positive Athlete: Celebrating Character Beyond the Scoreboard

Athletic trainers see student-athletes from a perspective few others do. We are there for the victories, but also for the injuries, rehabilitation sessions, setbacks, difficult conversations, and quiet moments of perseverance that may never appear on a scoreboard.

That perspective makes ATs uniquely positioned to recognize young people whose impact extends well beyond athletic performance. The Rocky Mountain Athletic Trainers' Association (RMATA) is pleased to highlight Positive Athlete, a free recognition program celebrating high-character high school student-athletes who demonstrate resilience, leadership, service, and a positive influence on those around them.

Positive Athlete recognizes young people who have overcome adversity, meaningfully contributed to their schools and communities, or simply demonstrate an infectious attitude that makes others better.

Athletic trainers regularly work alongside student-athletes during some of the most challenging moments of their athletic careers. We see the injured athlete who remains committed to teammates, the senior who mentors younger athletes, and the student who perseveres through difficult circumstances.

Positive Athlete makes recognition easy. Any adult can submit a nomination, the process is free, and it takes approximately five minutes. Student-athletes in grades 9–12 are eligible, including participants in school-sanctioned, club, individual, adaptive, and unified sports. Nominees receive access to lifelong leadership and career resources and may be eligible for scholarships of up to \$5,000. Positive Athlete also reports that 97% of nominees feel more confident and inspired after being recognized. Positive Athlete has received a NATA Presidential Letter of Support, and the organizations continue a national strategic alliance that includes recognizing student-athletes who demonstrate resilience following injury and supporting student-athlete health and well-being.

The connection to athletic training is particularly meaningful: Positive Athlete reports that health and medical careers are the No. 1 career field of interest among its nominees, by nearly a two-to-one margin.



Through the Positive Athlete App, nominees can also access resources introducing them to careers in athletic training. For an AT, a nomination can therefore do more than recognize character, it can reinforce resilience, encourage positive leadership, and potentially introduce a student to our profession.

Positive Athlete also recognizes the adults who create positive environments for young people, with special categories for athletic trainers, coaches, and athletic directors. RMATA athletic trainers have already been among those honored. **Matt Oakes** of Telluride High School in Colorado and **Peter Dillon Alam** of Capital High School in New Mexico have both received Positive Athlete recognition. Their recognition reflects qualities ATs demonstrate throughout our district every day: service, empathy, resilience, advocacy, and a commitment to helping young people thrive.

Think about the student-athletes who walk through your athletic training facility each day. Perhaps one persevered through a difficult rehabilitation, continued supporting teammates after an injury, overcame significant adversity, or simply makes the people around them better. The RMATA encourages athletic trainers throughout Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming to help identify and celebrate the remarkable student-athletes and colleagues within our communities.

Make an Impact: NATA Volunteer Opportunities

Looking for an opportunity to contribute to the athletic training profession beyond the state and district levels? The National Athletic Trainers' Association (NATA) offers numerous volunteer leadership opportunities that allow members to share their expertise, collaborate with colleagues nationwide, and help shape the future of our profession.

Serving in a national leadership capacity is an excellent way to expand your professional network, develop leadership skills, and ensure that the perspectives of athletic trainers throughout District 7 are represented at the national level.

Don't miss your opportunity to get involved! We encourage RMATA members to explore these positions (via NATA GATHER), consider applying, or nominate a deserving colleague before the **October 19** deadline. Your voice and expertise can make a difference!

RMATA members are encouraged to consider the following current volunteer opportunities:

- COPA – Community Outreach Panel Member
- COPA – Entrepreneurship Panel Member
- COPA – Analytics and Outcomes Panel Chair
- COPA – Physician Practice Panel Member
- ICSM – NAIA Panel Member
- ICSM – Two-Year Institution Panel, NJCAA Member
- State Association Advisory Committee – Division III Representative (Arizona and Colorado members only)
- Student Leadership Committee – District 7 Representative

RMATA members are encouraged to connect with NATA District 7 Director Valerie Herzog with any questions, comments, concerns, or ideas related to the NATA and the athletic training profession. Valerie is committed to representing the interests of District 7 members and welcomes your input. Reach out anytime at D7director@rmata.org

PROFESSIONAL BASEBALL ATHLETIC TRAINERS SOCIETY

2026 ATHLETIC TRAINING STUDENT SYMPOSIUM

Hosted by the Professional Baseball Athletic Trainers Society (PBATS), the **free virtual (Zoom)** symposium's agenda boasts an impressive lineup of keynote speakers, each a trailblazer in the athletic training field.



DATE
Nov. 11, 2026

SAVE THE DATE



TIME
6:00 PM EST



KANSAS CITY ROYALS
Nick Kenney



NEW YORK YANKEES
Steve Donohue



TAMPA BAY RAYS
Joe Bengtson

Make an Impact: Volunteer with the NATA Foundation

The NATA Research & Education Foundation Has an Open Call for Volunteers

Looking for an opportunity to give back to the profession and connect with colleagues beyond District 7? The NATA Research & Education Foundation is seeking volunteers for its 2027 committees, and RMATA members are encouraged to consider getting involved. Volunteers play an essential role in advancing the Foundation's research, education, and professional development programs. The Foundation is seeking individuals from a variety of backgrounds, experiences, and career stages who can bring new perspectives and expertise to its work. The 2027 Committee Open Call runs through November 15, with opportunities ranging from committee member to chair positions.

Questions about volunteer opportunities can be directed to fndnstaff@nata.org.



District 7 State Ambassadors

AZ Michelle Gonzalez
 Tamara Valovich McLeod
 CO Tonya Freeze
 NM VACANT - APPLY TODAY
 UT Patty Fahringer
 WY Jenna Walker



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Volunteer Spotlight:



This quarter, RMATA is proud to spotlight Jose Sandoval De Leon, who has served for the past two years as Colorado's Early Professional Representative on the RMATA Emerging and Early Professionals (EEP) Committee. During that same period, Jose expanded his professional service by joining the Colorado Athletic Trainers' Association Board of Directors as an advisory member.

Jose joined the U.S. Air Force Academy athletic training staff in 2024, where he primarily works with football. His previous experiences include working with football at UNLV and completing NFL internships with the Denver Broncos and Jacksonville Jaguars. A graduate of the University of Oregon, Jose earned his Master of Athletic Training from the University of Utah in 2022.

For Jose, volunteering is an opportunity to return the support he received early in his own career:

"I enjoy volunteering to help pave a way for those up and coming. Someone had to take a chance and mentor me to get where I am now, and I want to continue that. I take pride in giving back. Plus, you never know the connections or doors that open from volunteering. My perspective on what I get to do every day is unique, and I enjoy sharing that."

Jose sums up his approach to professional service with a favorite quote from Muhammad Ali: "Service to others is the rent you pay for your room here on Earth".



The RMATA Educator's Roundtable

The RMATA Educators Roundtable is a longstanding initiative designed to bring athletic training educators together to connect, collaborate, and discuss issues affecting education across District 7.

Traditionally, the group has gathered in conjunction with the RMATA Annual Clinical Symposium, providing an informal forum for educators to share ideas, challenges, and successful practices.

In recent years, Glenn Edgerton, EdD, LAT, ATC, has helped expand the Roundtable by coordinating regular virtual meetings throughout the year. The agenda is intentionally driven by the participants, allowing conversations to focus on the topics and challenges most relevant to the group.

All RMATA members are welcome to participate, whether you are a full-time educator, preceptor, clinical educator, or simply interested in athletic training education.

The next Educators Roundtable will be held **October 23, 2026, from 12:00–1:00 p.m.** Arizona time. If you would like to join the conversation, please use this Teams [link](#).

Bring a question, share an idea, or simply join us to connect with fellow educators from across District 7.

Share Your News with RMATA!

Great things are happening throughout District 7, and we want to help tell your story! RMATA members are encouraged to share professional accomplishments, awards, innovative programs, community outreach, research, career milestones, or anything else newsworthy.

Your story could be featured in the RMATA quarterly newsletter, highlighted through RMATA social media, or considered for submission to NATA News.

Whether it is your own accomplishment or the great work of a colleague, help us showcase the people and programs advancing athletic training across Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming.

Have something to share? Send your news, photos, and accomplishments to your respective State Public Relations Chair or directly to RMATA Public Relations Committee Chairwoman Ashley Sillick at pr@rmata.org

If it's worth celebrating, we want to hear about it and help share it!



Telluride HS AT and Positive Athlete Award Winner, Matt Oakes on the job

RMATA Distinguished Athletic Trainer Award Renamed in Honor of Tim “Doc” Acklin

The Rocky Mountain Athletic Trainers’ Association is proud to announce that the RMATA Distinguished Athletic Trainer Award has been renamed the Tim “Doc” Acklin Distinguished Athletic Trainer Award, honoring the remarkable career, service, and legacy of longtime RMATA contributor and Hall of Fame member Tim “Doc” Acklin.

For nearly five decades, Doc was a pillar of the athletic training community in New Mexico and throughout the Rocky Mountain region. His career was defined not only by the countless student-athletes he cared for, but also by the generations of athletic trainers and healthcare professionals he educated, mentored, and inspired. To his students, colleagues, coaches, and administrators, he was simply “Doc”, a trusted healthcare professional, compassionate healer, mentor, and, for many, a father figure.

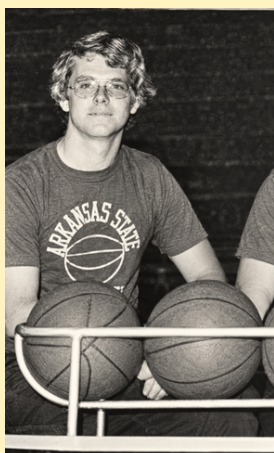
After completing a degree from the University of New Mexico, under the direction of L.F. “Tow” Diehm in 1982, Doc joined Mayfield High School in 1985, where he served as Head Athletic Trainer and a science instructor through the 2011–2012 school year. He also played an important role in the development of the New Mexico State University Athletic Training Education Program, serving as one of its earliest clinical instructors.

Doc’s commitment to professional service was equally extraordinary. He served on the NMATA Board of Directors for all but two years of the association’s existence, holding numerous leadership positions, including Southern Representative, Secretary/Treasurer, Vice President, and President. His contributions to athletic training were recognized with induction into both the NMATA Hall of Fame and RMATA Hall of Fame in 2013. It is fitting that an award recognizing sustained and impactful professional service now bears his name.

The Tim “Doc” Acklin Distinguished Athletic Trainer Award recognizes an RMATA member with a long history of meaningful service whose efforts at the state, district, regional, or national level have advanced the RMATA, its members, and the athletic training profession. Nominees must have been RMATA members for at least 15 years and demonstrate a significant record of service, leadership, advocacy, scholarship, volunteerism, or other unique contributions.

Through this award, Doc’s legacy will continue to be reflected in the athletic trainers who, like him, choose to give their time, expertise, and leadership in service to others and to the profession.

Nominations for the **Tim “Doc” Acklin Distinguished Athletic Trainer Award** are due January 15 each year.



11TH ANNUAL
Advanced Care of the Young Athlete Symposium

NOVEMBER 20, 2026
7:30 AM - 4:25 PM

REGISTRATION NOW OPEN!

A premier learning experience for healthcare professionals dedicated to the care of youth athletes.

IN-PERSON AND VIRTUAL OPTIONS AVAILABLE!

EVIDENCE-BASED EDUCATION ON:

- Lower extremity fractures
- Osteochondritis dissecans (OCD)
- ACL injuries
- Concussion-related conditions
- Sports nutrition
- Performance-enhancing rehabilitation
- Diagnostic ultrasound
- Return-to-play assessment

CONTINUING EDUCATION
Up to 7.5 EBP Category hours/CEUs approved for Athletic Trainers.

LEARN FROM EXPERTS
Faculty from Children's Hospital Colorado Sports Medicine Center

INTERACTIVE WORKSHOPS
Sports nutrition, performance-enhancing rehabilitation, diagnostic ultrasound, and return-to-play assessment.

EARLY REGISTRATION PRICING - SAVE BEFORE SEPTEMBER 20!

	BEFORE 9/20	AFTER 9/20
MDs & PhDs (In Person)	\$95	\$110
MDs & PhDs (Virtual)	\$180	\$180
PhDs, RNs, PTs & Allied Health	\$60	\$75
Athletic Trainers	\$45	\$60
CHCO Students & Trainers	\$25	\$40

REGISTER TODAY!
Scan the QR code to register.

Registration includes in-person or virtual attendance options. Choose the format that works best for you!

Advancing the health, performance, and safety of our young athletes—together.



REGISTER HERE

RMATA Scholarships



Dan Libera **L.F. "Tow" Diehm**



Earlene Durant **William Lyons**



Susan K. Hillman

Each year, the RMATA has the opportunity to invest directly in the future of our profession by recognizing deserving students through our RMATA scholarship program.

These scholarships do more than provide financial support. Each honors an athletic trainer whose career helped shape athletic training education, professional service, and the growth of our profession throughout District 7. The **Dan Libera, Earlene Durrant Doctorate, L.F. "Tow" Diehm, William Lyons, and Susan K. Hillman** Scholarships carry forward the legacies of individuals who made lasting contributions to athletic training in Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Utah, Wyoming, and beyond. As an RMATA member, you likely know a student or colleague deserving of this recognition. Faculty, preceptors, supervisors, and fellow ATs are encouraged to identify qualified individuals and personally encourage them to apply. Sometimes that simple encouragement from a mentor or colleague is what prompts an outstanding candidate to put their name forward.

Applications are due December 31, so now is a great time to reach out to a deserving student or colleague.

Help RMATA recognize excellence, support the next generation of athletic trainers, and continue the legacies of those who helped build our profession. **Please click on the links to the left to learn more about our pioneering ATs!**

The RMATA Synergy Award

Celebrating Collaboration in Secondary School Athletic Training

Great athletic health care rarely happens in isolation. It is built through relationships, athletic trainers working alongside physicians, nurses, administrators, physical therapists, strength and conditioning professionals, and others to create an environment where student-athletes receive exceptional care.

The **RMATA Synergy Award** recognizes a secondary school athletic trainer who exemplifies that collaborative spirit. Synergy is the increased effectiveness that results when people work together, and this award celebrates an AT who has developed meaningful professional partnerships to improve athlete care and advance athletic training within their community.

Examples of this collaboration may include facility enhancements, improved emergency protocols, promotion of the athletic training profession, development of internship programs, or other initiatives demonstrating what can be accomplished when professionals combine their expertise and resources.

Consider the secondary school athletic trainers in your community who consistently bring people together. The ideal nominee is someone whose influence extends beyond the athletic training facility and who has built lasting relationships that improve the health and safety of their students.

Eligible nominees must be RMATA and state association members, have a current NPI number, be in good standing with the BOC and applicable state regulatory board, and have worked at least five academic years within the institution or school district where their collaborative efforts are demonstrated. Individuals may not self-nominate.

Collaboration with the nominee is encouraged to ensure the application fully captures their accomplishments. The Synergy has been awarded twice since its inception. Lisa Walker was the inaugural Synergy Award winner in 2017 and Aaron Stem in 2018.

Please contact RMATA Secondary Schools Committee Chair **Jenny Van Meter** with any Questions at: secondarieschools@rmata.org



Active Release Techniques is the leading provider of non-invasive treatment for soft-tissue and nerve disorders. Our seminars teach providers how to evaluate and treat soft-tissue dysfunction with precision - improving recovery timelines, reducing pain, and restoring function and movement. Whether it's helping an athlete return to peak performance or enabling an employee to work pain-free, ART is helping make measurable differences in real lives every day.



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RMATA20





News From Arizona

AZATA Welcomes Three New Board Members

The Arizona Athletic Trainers' Association (AZATA) recently welcomed three newly elected members to its Board of Directors. John Valencia will serve as Vice President, Megan Mulready as Secretary, and Johannah Elliot as Member at Large. These individuals bring their perspectives, experience, and commitment to advancing the athletic training profession throughout Arizona. Congratulations to each of these new leaders, and thank you for your willingness to serve!

AZATA Prepares to Celebrate 50 Years!

A major milestone is on the horizon as AZATA prepares to celebrate its 50th anniversary and Annual Symposium, scheduled for January 29–31, 2027. This landmark event will provide an opportunity to reflect on five decades of professional growth, advocacy, education, and service to Arizona's athletic training community. Plans are underway to make this anniversary symposium a memorable celebration of the individuals and accomplishments that have shaped AZATA's history. Stay tuned for additional details as this exciting event approaches!

AZATA Promotes Heat Illness Prevention Through Public Service Announcements

Recognizing the unique challenges of athletic participation in Arizona's extreme heat, AZATA recently developed and released a series of public service announcements highlighting the essential role athletic trainers play in preventing, recognizing, and managing exertional heat illness. These educational messages emphasize the importance of having qualified athletic trainers involved in athlete health and safety while raising public awareness of the profession's expertise. This initiative represents an excellent example of proactive advocacy and public education that reinforces the value of athletic trainers throughout Arizona.

From welcoming new leadership to celebrating 50 years of professional service and championing athlete safety, exciting things are happening across Arizona! Congratulations to AZATA and its members for their continued commitment to advancing the profession and protecting the health and well-being of physically active individuals throughout the Grand Canyon State!





News From Colorado

CATA Secondary School Podcast Offers Free CEUs

Looking for an easy way to continue learning while earning CEUs? The CATA Secondary School Committee's podcast offers free continuing education through select episodes. The podcast features conversations and topics relevant to athletic trainers working in the secondary school setting and beyond. Check out the available episodes on Spotify and take advantage of this member resource.

Dillon Hyland Appointed CATA Treasurer

Dillon Hyland, Associate Professor at the University of Northern Colorado, has been appointed to serve as Treasurer of the Colorado Athletic Trainers' Association. Hyland succeeds Julia Villani in the role. CATA extends its appreciation to Julia for her service and contributions to the association and welcomes Dillon to his new leadership position.

Save the Date: 2027 CATA Annual Clinical Symposium

Mark your calendars! The 2027 CATA Annual Clinical Symposium is scheduled for April 17-18, 2027, at Colorado Mesa University in Grand Junction. Additional information regarding programming, registration, and other symposium activities will be shared as the event approaches.

Jenn Roberts-Uhlig Receives CATA President's Award

CHSAA Associate Commissioner Jenn Roberts-Uhlig was recently honored with the 2026 CATA President's Award in recognition of her unwavering support, advocacy, and appreciation for the athletic training profession. Jenn has been an important partner in advancing student-athlete health and safety and strengthening collaboration between CHSAA and Colorado athletic trainers. Congratulations to Jenn on this well-deserved recognition!

CATA Socials Coming Across Colorado

CATA is creating more opportunities for members to connect beyond meetings and educational events. Be on the lookout for upcoming CATA socials across the state, providing athletic trainers an opportunity to reconnect with colleagues, meet other professionals in their region, and strengthen the Colorado athletic training community.

From new leadership and professional recognition to continuing education, upcoming events, and opportunities to connect, there is plenty happening across Colorado. Congratulations to our members and partners, and thank you to everyone working to advance athletic training throughout the Centennial State!



CATA Treasurer, Dillon Hyland.

Jeb Davis, Jenn Roberts Uhlig, Chad Smidt and Jim Keller



News From New Mexico

NMATA Vice President Supports Team USA Diving

NMATA Vice President Dr. Kevin Schroeder, faculty member and Coordinator of Clinical Education for the Athletic Training Program, recently supported Team USA Diving at the 2026 AQUA Junior World Diving Championships in Rijeka, Croatia. AQUA-sanctioned international competitions are an important part of the athlete development pathway, providing emerging elite divers with valuable international experience as they pursue opportunities to qualify for future World Championships and Olympic teams. Dr. Schroeder's involvement is a great example of New Mexico athletic trainers contributing their expertise on the international stage.

Yvette Pomponi Receives NMATA's Highest Recognition

Late this summer, Yvette Pomponi was honored with the NMATA Most Distinguished Athletic Trainer Award. The award recognizes outstanding professional achievement and service to athletic training. Congratulations to Yvette on this well-deserved recognition and her contributions to the profession in New Mexico.

NATA Highlights Joe Mora During National Hispanic Heritage Month

New Mexico athletic trainer Joe Mora was recently featured by the National Athletic Trainers' Association as part of its celebration of National Hispanic Heritage Month. In the NATA feature, Opening Doors for the Next Generation, Mora's story highlights professional leadership, representation, and the importance of creating opportunities for future generations of athletic trainers. His recognition provides another example of the significant contributions New Mexico athletic trainers are making to the profession nationally.

From international competition to legislative advocacy, continuing education, and professional recognition, there is plenty to celebrate across New Mexico. Congratulations to these NMATA members, and thank you to everyone working to advance athletic training throughout the Land of Enchantment!!



NMATA Vice President, Kevin Schroeder, Joe Mora and Yvette Pomponi and NMATA President Joe Mora



News From Utah

Utah Athletic Trainers Recognized as HOSA Heroes

HOSA recently recognized Utah athletic trainers Ryan Eyring and Krista Taylor as HOSA Heroes, honoring individuals whose actions exemplify courage, compassion, and a commitment to serving others. This recognition highlights the meaningful impact athletic trainers have on the health, safety, and well-being of those they serve. Congratulations to Ryan and Krista on this well-deserved recognition!

Wasatch High School Athletic Trainers Demonstrate Emergency Preparedness

During a recent high school football game, Wasatch High School Head Athletic Trainer Nate Matis successfully evaluated and managed a student-athlete who sustained lumbar vertebral fractures. Matis, assisted by BYU athletic training student Mia Harper, promptly activated the school's Emergency Action Plan (EAP), ensuring the student-athlete received appropriate emergency care. Their coordinated response underscores the importance of emergency preparedness, clinical decision-making, and the critical role athletic trainers play in protecting student-athletes.

Save the Date: 2026 UATA Annual Clinical Symposium

Mark your calendars! The 2026 Utah Athletic Trainers' Association Annual Clinical Symposium is scheduled for December 5, 2026, at Brigham Young University. This annual event provides an excellent opportunity for athletic trainers to engage in professional development, connect with colleagues, and strengthen the athletic training community across Utah. Additional details regarding programming and registration will be shared as the event approaches.

From professional recognition and exemplary emergency care to upcoming educational opportunities, Utah athletic trainers continue to demonstrate their dedication to the profession and the communities they serve. Congratulations to those recognized, and thank you to all UATA members for their ongoing contributions to athletic training throughout the Beehive State!



HOSA Heroes

The HOSA Hero Award recognizes accountable bystanders—HOSA members, alumni, and advisors—who take action and make a difference to save the lives of others. This year's recipients, advisors Rory Eyring and Krista Taylor, exemplified courage, preparation, and leadership when they, alongside their students, responded to a cardiac emergency at a Utah cross-country meet. Through quick thinking, teamwork, and the life-saving skills reinforced through HOSA and emergency medical training, their actions helped save the life of a father and demonstrated the powerful real-world impact of HOSA.



HOSA HERO
Krista Taylor
UTAH



HOSA HERO
Rory Eyring
UTAH



News From Wyoming

Paige Phalen Elected WYOATA Vice President

Congratulations to Paige Phalen on her election as Vice President of the Wyoming Athletic Trainers' Association (WYOATA)! Paige will officially assume her leadership responsibilities on January 1, 2027. WYOATA looks forward to her contributions as the association continues its efforts to support members, advance the profession, and promote athletic training throughout Wyoming.

WYOATA Launches Website Redesign and Seeks Member Photos

WYOATA is beginning the process of a complete website redesign to improve communication, highlight member accomplishments, and better showcase the athletic training profession across Wyoming. As part of this effort, the association is seeking action photos of Wyoming athletic trainers working in their respective settings. Members are encouraged to share photos that capture the diverse roles and meaningful contributions of athletic trainers throughout the state. Help WYOATA put the profession on display!

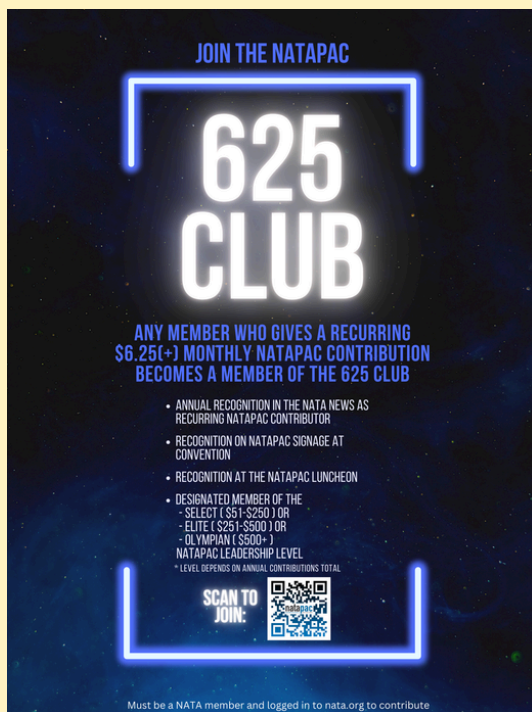
WYOATA Completes NATA Legislative Boot Camp

Late this summer, WYOATA completed the National Athletic Trainers' Association's Legislative Boot Camp, an important step toward strengthening the association's advocacy efforts. This educational initiative provides state leaders with resources and strategies to navigate the legislative process, build relationships with policymakers, and advocate effectively for the athletic training profession. WYOATA's participation reflects its commitment to advancing professional recognition and supporting the interests of athletic trainers throughout Wyoming.

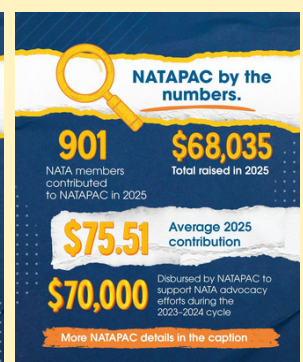
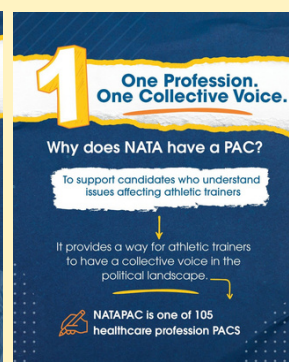
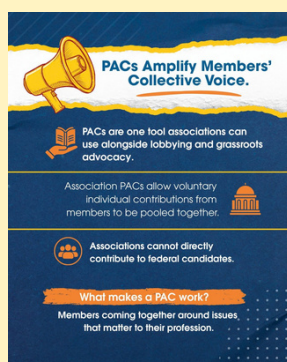
From welcoming new leadership and strengthening legislative advocacy to improving member engagement and visibility, WYOATA continues to build momentum. Congratulations to Paige, and thank you to Wyoming's athletic trainers and association volunteers for their dedication to advancing the profession throughout the Cowboy State!

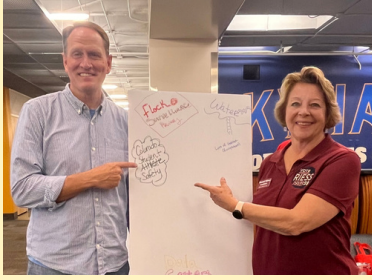


Zach Olivarez, Garret Havig, Clay Wilson, Paige Phalen, Sami Cole, Deanna Kurkendall and Adam McFarland planning for Wyoming's future!



There are two great ways to make a difference beyond your daily practice! The NATA PAC supports political advocacy efforts that help ensure athletic trainers have a voice in decisions affecting our profession. The NATA Research & Education Foundation advances athletic training through research, scholarships, and educational opportunities. Both organizations play important, complementary roles in strengthening athletic training. Consider making a contribution to BOTH and help shape the future of our profession!





RMATA President, Jeb Davis and CO HD 59 Candidate Naomi Reiss discussing CO student-athlete safety

With many state legislatures out of session, lawmakers are spending more time in their home districts. This is a perfect opportunity to introduce yourself, share what you do as an athletic trainer, and begin building relationships with those who represent you. Don't wait for legislation to be introduced, meaningful advocacy starts with a simple conversation!

Advocacy is a Year Round Effort!

While I genuinely enjoy my role with the RMATA, occasionally, I find myself a touch nostalgic for the CATA days! One of the things I value most about state leadership and happily lean into is governmental affairs. Legislative work can sometimes feel removed from our day-to-day practice, but few things have greater potential to shape the future of our profession. More importantly, successful advocacy rarely begins when a bill is introduced. It is the product of years of relationship building, coalition work, education, preparation, and simply showing up. Across District 7, our state associations have been doing exactly that.

The **AZATA** has steadily strengthened its advocacy efforts. Following their NATA Legislative Boot Camp in October 2025, the AZATA adopted a more strategic approach focused on building legislative relationships. A member of Arizona's Smart Heart Coalition for nearly five years, AZATA also supported successful efforts to expand AED access in secondary schools. Looking ahead, AZATA is exploring the Athletic Training Compact while partnering with the Arizona Department of Education on cardiac emergency preparedness and data collection.

The **CATA** has made advocacy a routine part of association operations. CATA has participated in the Colorado Smart Heart Coalition for three years, joined the American Heart Association and NFL for Capitol advocacy events, and provided testimony on regulatory language affecting AT practice. CATA established CAT-PAC in 2023, completed the NATA Legislative Boot Camp in 2024 and Third Party Reimbursement Workshop in 2025. In 2026, CATA helped successfully oppose HB26-1231, which would have authorized physical therapists to perform sports physicals. With similar legislation expected to return, CATA will prioritize that effort over pursuing the AT Compact in 2027 while continuing its annual Capitol Hill Day.

The **NMATA** completed the NATA Legislative Boot Camp in summer 2025 and has supported efforts surrounding AED availability and emergency preparedness in secondary schools. New Mexico regulations currently require individuals coaching grades 7–12 in public schools to maintain CPR certification that includes AED training. The NMATA has also established one of my favorite advocacy traditions in the District: its longstanding Hit the Hill Day, where athletic trainers provide health care for a basketball game between members of the New Mexico House and Senate. Those interactions provide something difficult to replicate through an email or legislative alert, a personal relationship with policymakers. The NMATA is now preparing to pursue membership in the Athletic Training Compact during the 2027 legislative session.

The **UATA** has recently navigated a professional review while working to modernize language and rules associated with the athletic training practice act. The UATA has also supported efforts to improve AED access in secondary schools and is developing a legislative luncheon to recognize and thank policymakers who have supported athletic trainers and athlete health and safety. Those relationships will become increasingly important as UATA prepares to pursue the Athletic Training Compact in an upcoming legislative session.

Advocacy is a Year Round Effort

The **WYATA** is similarly building for the future and have also completed the NATA Legislative Boot Camp this past summer, and Wyoming athletic trainers have supported efforts to expand AED access in secondary schools. The association is now preparing to sponsor legislation to bring Wyoming into the Athletic Training Compact.

The RMATA is proud to support the legislative efforts of our five member states and the dedicated volunteers who move this important work forward. But effective advocacy is not solely the responsibility of association leadership; each of us has a role to play. I encourage every RMATA member to make a personal plan for advocacy in the coming year. Start by connecting with your state Governmental Affairs Committee (GAC) Chair, identifying your elected legislators, and finding opportunities to build relationships and share the value of athletic training. The links below provide an easy starting point. Remember, advocacy is not an event; it is an ongoing investment in the future of our profession.

Jeb Davis
President
Rocky Mountain Athletic Trainers' Association

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