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PRESS RELEASE

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STRATEGIC ALLIANCE STATEMENT LEGAL AND ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITY TO REPORT UNREGULATED PRACTICE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - November 11, 2013 - Omaha, NE - The leadership of the Strategic Alliance, which includes the Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education (CAATE), the National Athletic Trainers' Association (NATA), the NATA Research and Education Foundation and the Board of Certification, Inc. (BOC), has concluded that it is necessary to issue a formal statement to remind institutions, employers, Athletic Trainers (ATs) and athletic training students that the practice of athletic training by unregulated individuals must be reported to the appropriate regulatory authorities. Just as unregulated practice is unethical and unprofessional, so is the failure to report this practice. Regulatory mechanisms exist to protect the public and to ensure safe and effective athletic training practice. ATs have both a legal and ethical responsibility to protect the public from those who engage in the practice of athletic training without a proper authorization from a state regulatory agency.

The Strategic Alliance has the responsibility to strongly advocate against the practice of athletic training without proper authorization from a state regulatory agency. The BOC notes a four-fold increase from 2011 to 2012 in the number of disciplinary cases against ATs who were found to have practiced without proper authorization from a state regulatory agency. Additionally, through the course of accreditation site visits, CAATE site visitors have observed the practice of athletic training by persons without a state credential and reported these individuals to the BOC and the appropriate state regulatory agency. Violations of state AT regulations are a breach of the *NATA Code of Ethics*. One of the fundamental characteristics of a healthcare profession is that practitioners are subject to regulatory control. ATs are responsible for the safety of their patients and to the profession. Adherence to legal and ethical standards is vital to the provision of safe and effective patient care and protects the credibility of ATs who practice legally.

An AT who has direct knowledge that an individual is practicing athletic training without state credentials, practicing outside of the scope of their state AT practice act, or is not adhering to the *BOC Standards of Professional Practice (BOC Standards)*, must report the violation to the appropriate state regulatory authority and the BOC via publicly available reporting mechanisms. The *BOC Code of Professional Responsibility 3.5* describes this responsibility as: **“The Athletic Trainer or applicant reports any suspected or known violation of a rule, requirement, regulation or law by him/herself and/or by another Athletic Trainer that is related to the practice of athletic training, public health, patient care or education.”**

This ethical duty to report is a common obligation for regulated healthcare professionals. Failure by an AT to report known violators represents a failure to protect the public and the profession. Furthermore, failure to report will result in disciplinary action by the state and/or the BOC. In addition, a program will be subject to disciplinary action if a person associated with a CAATE accredited program fails to report illegal athletic training practice.

To report unlawful AT practice please file a complaint with the BOC. Information about filing a complaint is available at www.bocatc.org/public/consumer-complaints.

The BOC, a national credentialing agency, has been certifying Athletic Trainers and identifying, for the public, quality healthcare professionals with certainty since 1969. More than 40,000 individuals have earned the ATC® credential worldwide. The BOC is headquartered at 1415 Harney Street, Suite 200, Omaha, Nebraska 68102. For more information, call (877) 262-3926 or visit the BOC website at www.bocatc.org.