

February 9, 2004

Ladies and Gentleman,

My name is Steve Ice, I work for Washburn University, and I am here today to give testimonial support for the athletic trainers HB # 2737 from the viewpoint of an individual in the University setting.

I do not speak as a representative of Washburn University, but from my view and observation of the university's commitment it has shown for the department in which I work, and for the development, the progression, and support they have given me.

When I arrived at Washburn's campus, it was with the intent to develop myself in my chosen profession, and I looked for every opportunity to enhance the atmosphere and profession in which I worked. Washburn has made outstanding strides in all areas in support of the athletic trainers profession, not only financially, but also in facilities, the introduction of the curriculum education, and additional certified staffing.

When I started at Washburn, the athletic training room was in a 10' x 12' room. The suggestion for me to use a crock pot as a hydrocollator seemed absurd to me. There was no available ice, heat, crutches or splints, although we did have a little bit of tape. As the first athletic trainer at the University, I experienced no budget, no desk, one two credit hour class that I was asked to teach for free, and no support staff. The training room was located in the corner of the men's locker room that was to also serve the female athletes. The only piece of equipment was a whirlpool, that was later determined to have been there since the 1940's. The athletes turned the whirlpool on and off by connecting the plug on the wall outlet, usually while standing in the whirlpool.

I mention this, not to make a dig at how poor and inadequate the conditions were, but to bring attention to the University's Administration the liabilities involved with the atmosphere the athletes were being subjected too. The administration responded to this liable situation, and the athletic training room progressed into a 15' x 20' room, then to a 1500 sq. ft. room in 1984. Facilities improved, equipment improved, and additional classes were taught.

The University athletes were not receiving suggested coverage by the Athletic Trainers for many of the practices and events. This was addressed by the University and two additional certified Athletic Trainers (Michael Ramirez, and Lela Schrott) were made available for event coverage's. In November 2000, I received a letter from the NCAA about the Athletic Trainer Educational Reform, and its Impact on Collegiate Athletic Health Care and Coverage. The Institutions dependent on the resources of the Athletic Trainers needed to consider modifications to their current athletics health care and coverage program. I informed Dr. Farley (University President), Ken Hackler (University Counselor), and Loren Ferre' (Athletic Director) of my concerns for obtaining additional personnel, but most importantly for the liability of the university and that the present standard of care was no longer going to be deemed reasonable by these institutions.

It is my belief that all college and high school institutions have legal obligation to use reasonable care to protect student athletes from foreseeable harm in any formal school sponsored activity whether they are in season or out of season. I am not aware of any current state or federal law requiring a specific number of staff. The primary determining factor in potential legal liability is the adequacy and quality of care provided by an institutions sports medicine team during the specific circumstances surrounding a student athletes injury. The other factors I consider are potential harm and the cost of providing reasonable coverage. The parents who contact my office have very high expectations for the standard of care given for their children, and the comfort they are looking for always stems around the quality of care and the credibility of who is caring for them.

The University Administration obtained additional Certified Athletic Training staff (John Burns, and Brian Zerger) to raise our standard of care for the welfare of our athletes, plus the additional supervised coverage of our athletic events. This was followed by the hiring of a Curriculum Education Coordinator (Dave Slack), followed by a Clinical Education Coordinator (John Burns), and the beginning of our Curriculum Education Program. Again with the aid of the Washburn Administration the Athletic Training profession progressed in our development, but the primary goal was still the welfare of our athletes under the direction of the Athletic Trainers.

The Athletic Training room is now a state of the art 3000 sq. ft. facility. The budget is very adequate and competitive with our NCAA Division and our MIAA conference. The University has consistently supported the Athletic Trainers demonstrated by the constant development in their professional growth, the responsibility for the safety and well being of it athletes, and ultimately in the credibility they bestow on the Athletic Trainers shoulders to keep them abreast of current development in the field, and finally to keep the University aware of libelous situations.

My testimony is not necessarily an uncommon progression and development in a collegiate atmosphere. As for my professional growth, I hope you view HB # 2737 for licensure as the next natural step in the progression of the field of Athletic Trainers, giving us the same credibility as our peers.