



Autonomy of the Certified Athletic Trainer Position Statement

**New Mexico Activities Association (NMAA)
Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC)**

Points of Emphasis

1. Independence of the athletic trainer and sports medicine team is critically important to ensure the health and well-being of the student-athlete and has been recognized as best practice.
2. The athletic trainer and/or team physician should be responsible for determining when a student-athlete is withheld from play (partially or completely), and for determining return to play.
3. The athletic trainer should retain the authority to use a functional assessment and a functional progression at their discretion to determine readiness for return to play even when a physician or other qualified medical provider unaffiliated with the school/district has released a student-athlete to participation.
4. Coaches, parents, and administrators should adhere to the decisions of the athletic trainer and/or team physician.
5. The following two documents outline best practices in further detail and should be considered by member schools when addressing the authority of the athletic trainer:
 - a. [Inter-Association Consensus Statement on Best Practices for Sports Medicine Management for Secondary Schools and Colleges](#)
 - b. [National Athletic Trainers Association Official Statement in Support of New NCAA Autonomous 5 \(aka Power Five\) Conferences Independent Medical Care Rules](#)

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