

# Physician Extender Reimbursement Model

## WATA Reimbursement Committee

The WATA Reimbursement Committee would like to present a physician extender based reimbursement model. This template will help to serve you and your colleagues to establish a pathway of program development. The committee would like to remind WATA members that this is only a general template and that some material may not apply to a given situation. Here are some of the WATA Reimbursement Committee suggestions with physician extender based structure models. **Credit goes to the NATA Committee on Reimbursement (NATACOR) for input into this model. Please continue to stay abreast of changes and information provided by the NATA/WATA.**

### **Before you even begin:**

***Licensure-*** It is the responsibility of all Licensed Athletic Trainers in Wisconsin to review and practice the scope of practice listed in the Athletic Trainer Licensure Bill. Remember all Certified Athletic Trainers in Wisconsin need to have a license, in order to bill with insurance companies.

***WATA/NATA Reimbursement Binders-*** It is strongly recommended that all Licensed Athletic Trainers in Wisconsin have a WATA and NATA reimbursement binder on hand at their facility. Binders are available by contacting WATA and NATA COR committee members. (Please see contacts at the end of this template)

***Continuing Education-*** In order to have success in your reimbursement model, Licensed Athletic Trainers need to attend the various continuing education seminars held by WATA and NATA. Reimbursement is a complex and sometimes frustrating topic and by having some knowledge of how the process works will help to alleviate some of those frustrations. WATA Reimbursement Committee will continue to have seminars on coding, billing, and documentation.

***WATA Insurance Template-*** The WATA Reimbursement Committee strongly suggests using the template designed for contacting insurance companies. Please keep track of your responses and report to the WATA Reimbursement Committee.

## **Program Design Pathway**

Licensed Athletic Trainers have been involved very closely with physicians for many years. The relationships that develop on the playing field can lead to endless opportunities in the physician's clinic. The athletic trainer provides many useful skills to the patients treated by the physician. With these skills, there are also great possibilities for reimbursement.

The most important key to develop a physician extender program is to develop a strong working relationship with the physician in regards to the role that the athletic trainer will have in their practice. The job duties will vary based on the needs of the physician and qualifications the athletic trainer possess.

Tasks that may be performed by the LAT:

1. Conduct initial patient medical history, brief injury evaluation, and prepare patient for physician evaluation.
2. Assist physician during evaluation with tasks such as: documentation, diagnostic test preparation, administering of injections.
3. Removal of sutures or wound care following surgery.
4. Casting or the assisting in casting of patients.
5. Providing specific rehabilitation suggestions while the patient is evaluated by the physician. This improves knowledge and support to the physician.
6. Provide rehabilitation services to the patient both at the time of evaluation as well as extended services after the evaluation.
7. Preparation of prescriptions and patient materials after the evaluation.
8. Fitting of braces or medical supplies ordered by the physician.
9. Provide rehabilitation and athletic training services in an outreach setting.

### **Benefits to the Physician's Practice**

1. Improves the efficiency of the physician.
2. Improves the services offered to the physician's patients.
3. Allows for access to rehabilitation knowledge during the evaluation process.
4. Offers enhanced communication between the physician and the rehabilitation provider, thus enhancing the entire injury outcome.
5. Opportunity for community outreach activities which will provide marketing possibilities.
6. Provides multiple avenues for additional revenue to a physician's clinic.

### **Basic Development of a Physician Extender Program in the Clinic**

1. Develop role of LAT in the clinic.
2. Discuss billing options with physician's business office.
3. Have a strong orientation and training plan on the practice of the physician.
4. A policy and procedure book with HIPPA/FERPA compliance manuals included.

5. The WATA/NATA Reimbursement Binders. NATA book I and II.
6. Code manuals
7. Wisconsin Athletic Trainer Licensure Packet.
8. If continued rehabilitation services are required, *Please remember to always contact the insurance company on each patient to verify coverage.*

### **The Process:**

1. Physician Referral for athletic training with a specific diagnosis pertaining to Wisconsin Athletic Trainers' Licensure Law
2. Business office / insurance specialist verifies type of insurance or self-pay.
3. Business office / insurance specialist calls the insurance company for authorization or pre-authorization if formal rehabilitation is needed.
4. Insurance company response, yes or no.
5. Ask for insurance supervisor if a no response. Also make use of WATA Template.
6. Insurance companies will advise as to coverage and amount of visits or UCR, usual customary and reasonable. This is based upon geographical region.
7. If ok from insurance company, licensed athletic trainer will verify diagnosis with a specific evaluation. (Evaluation code 97005)

### **Marketing and Public Education**

It is the responsibility of every Licensed Athletic Trainer to promote their profession to the public. Furthermore it is important to put a "Brand" on the type of services that athletic trainers specialize in. This "Brand" may be different depending upon your situation. For example, everyone is familiar with Coke Cola. However Coke needs to constantly remind people about their different brands of soda. Please contact NATA for promotional material. Here are some suggestions for promoting our profession: Keep in mind that you are not only informing the public about athletic training, but also reimbursement possibilities.

1. Plan to attend various service organization meetings and promote athletic training.
2. Attend various school extracurricular parent/coaches meetings and promote athletic training.
3. It is essential to educate physicians on athletic training services and the referral possibilities based upon Wisconsin Athletic Training Licensure Law.
4. Submit informational messages and/or advertisements to local newspapers, journals, radio, and television markets.
5. Participate as guest speaker at various educational symposiums attended by allied health care professionals and physicians.
6. Participate in the NATA National Athletic Training Month.

## **Targeted Reimbursement Groups**

- All third party insured or covered individuals
- PPO's
- Indemnity plans
- HMO's
- Self Insured programs

In order to bill an HMO for athletic training services, you must be a member of the network. You must have a contract with the HMO and our contract would spell out how much and under what conditions you will be paid. PPOs or indemnity plans do not require membership for billing.

Note: The Licensed Athletic Trainer is responsible for his/her scope of practice requirements. Again, check for the athletic trainer referral from a physician, exact diagnosis, ICD-9 code, revenue code 951, proper forms, and use of proper CPT codes. Of course, the documentation is of utmost importance throughout the whole process.