

VATA Recommendation to Athletic Trainers

Statement:

1. Athletic trainers that choose to report their Virginia license within their signature/credentials are recommended to use "LAT"
2. Athletic Trainers should report their credentials as: highest degree obtained, licensure, credentials in order of difficulty to obtain.
3. ATC is a registered trademark and may not be altered in any way (for example: ATC/L)

Background:

The reporting of credentials, licenses, and degrees among athletic trainers is inconsistent and confusing to other health care professionals. In the state of Virginia licensed athletic trainers are using VATL, ATC/L, LAT, and others variations to indicate their licensure. With these inconsistencies it would be understandable for other health care practitioners to assume there is a difference between two athletic trainers' backgrounds strictly based off of how they choose to report their licensure from the Virginia Department of Health Professions. Additionally, clients looking for athletic training services in the private setting may also be confused by the array of licensure reporting. Therefore, we have been working to normalize reporting within the state by investigating the best ways to be consistent. In doing so, we have examined physical therapists' methods for reporting licensure and other states' athletic trainers.

Purpose:

We are making a recommendation to licensed athletic trainers in the Commonwealth of Virginia in an effort to improve consistency in the profession. The profession of athletic training needs consistency in the reporting of credentials to other professionals and clients, and to avoid trademark infractions.

Methods:

VATA President Sedory initiated a task force who consulted key policy makers including: NATA chairperson for the Committee for Practice Advancement, the Board of Certification's Director of Credentialing and Regulatory Affairs, Virginia Board of Medicine, VATA Executive council, VATA Constitution and Bylaws committee, and regular members. This group pored over the available documents, compared against other states, and heard the opinions of subject matter experts.

Summary:

The current standard among health care professionals is to report any education beyond a bachelor's degree first, followed by licensure, followed by credentials (ex. PhD, LAT, ATC). A discussion with the Virginia Department of Health Professions Board has recently affirmed these standards. Additionally, there is no indication from the Virginia Department of Health

Professions that specific language needs to be added to Athletic Trainers' practice guidelines regarding the use of specific acronyms (e.g. LAT, VATL).

At the national level there is no standard in reporting. The only absolute that exists about licensure reporting is that the use of ATC/L is a violation of a registered trademark and should never be used.

The current standard in physical therapy is to report licensure first (APTA Policy Booklet, Page 455). An example of this would be PT, PhD, DPT. This method of reporting provides an immediate declaration of the individual's primary occupation.

After a review of a number of colleges and universities it appears the most common reporting method is Licensed Athletic Trainer (LAT). There are two significant benefits to using this acronym. First, it would improve state-to-state consistency and may lead to a national statement on the issue. Secondly, it would decrease overall ambiguity, especially among other health professionals and client pools.

We did consider the change from VATL by many licensed ATs in the state of Virginia and how that might affect them. In which state the AT was licensed would no longer be clear. However, this method of licensure reporting is inconsistent with most other states and other health professionals. Additionally, if 50 states were to adopt this tact the number of reporting methods would be illogical.

References:

American Physical Therapy Association positions, standards, guidelines, policies and procedures. June 2014; 454-456.

Knight KL, Starkey C, Ingersoll CD. Proper treatment of degrees, licenses, and credentials. NATA News. June 2003; 48-49.