



NFL FOUNDATION, NATIONAL ATHLETIC TRAINERS' ASSOCIATION (NATA), GATORADE AND PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALL ATHLETIC TRAINERS SOCIETY (PFATS) EXPAND COMMITMENT TO FUND ATHLETIC TRAINERS IN UNDERSERVED HIGH SCHOOLS NATIONWIDE

EXPANDED PROGRAM AND NATIONAL CONTEST ANNOUNCED AT NATA'S 66TH ANNUAL CONVENTION

St. Louis, June 24, 2015 – At the National Athletic Trainers' Association (NATA) 66th Clinical Symposia and AT Expo in St. Louis today, the NFL Foundation, NATA, Gatorade and the Professional Football Athletic Trainers Society (PFATS) announced the expansion of the athletic trainer outreach program for the 2015-2016 school year, funding additional athletic trainers in underserved high schools nationwide. The groups will contribute more than \$2 million to the program, doubling last year's \$1 million contribution, as well as provide educational resources, hydration solutions, equipment and programmatic support.

In August, a nationwide contest will launch to give high schools across the country an opportunity to win funding for athletic trainers to help ensure the safety of their youth athletes. In addition, NFL teams will continue to provide athletic trainers in NFL communities where they are most urgently needed, building on efforts started by the Chicago Bears in 2013 and taken up by 16 NFL teams in 2014. To date, the outreach program is impacting more than 160,000 youth athletes across more than 670 schools nationwide.

"The NFL Foundation is proud to expand this program to more schools keeping more athletes of all levels safer," said Dallas Cowboys Executive Vice President **Charlotte Jones Anderson**, chair of the NFL Foundation. "We are pleased that Gatorade is joining NATA, PFATS and NFL teams as we continue improving youth athlete safety across all sports for boys and girls by making available athletic trainers across the country."

"The National Athletic Trainers' Association continues to champion the need for increased athletic trainers and the importance of sports safety protocols in high schools across the country," said NATA President **Jim Thornton**, MA, ATC, CES. "With just 37 percent of all high schools having

full-time athletic trainers, we know the expanded NFL Foundation high school initiative with the support of NATA, Gatorade and the Professional Football Athletic Trainers Society will help to ensure best practices are in place for underserved schools. Together, we will improve the quality of health care young athletes receive.”

“We know how important secondary school athletic trainers are to the health and safety of the over eight million U.S. high school athletes - which is why supporting this profession has been a focus of our 30+ year partnership with the NATA,” said **Jeff Kearney**, senior director, Gatorade Sports Marketing. “We believe this program is an important step toward the ultimate goal of having a full-time athletic trainer in every high school in the country, and we couldn’t be more excited to support the NFL and NATA’s efforts.”

“The Professional Football Athletic Trainers Society has a longstanding commitment to youth sports safety and recognizes the important role we play in providing NFL athletic trainers on-site at schools for additional expertise and education,” says **Rick Burkholder**, MS, ATC, PFATS president and head athletic trainer of the Kansas City Chiefs. “Our collaborative work with the NFL Foundation, NFL teams and NATA in year one of this program had such terrific impact and success that we know this expanded effort, now with Gatorade’s support, will make a difference in the health care these young athletes receive.”

In May 2014, at the first-ever Healthy Kids and Safe Sports Concussion Summit at the White House, President Obama announced the NFL Foundation was committing \$25 million to test and expand health and safety projects over the next three years. That commitment included \$1 million to fund athletic trainers in underserved high schools nationwide in 2014 in collaboration with the National Athletic Trainers’ Association and the Professional Football Athletic Trainers Society.

Athletic trainers play an important role in keeping young athletes safe. According to a new benchmark study, just over one third of every high school in the United States has at least one full-time athletic trainer. A study from the American Academy of Pediatrics showed that the presence of athletic trainers can have a significant positive impact on student-athlete health, resulting in lower injury rates, improved diagnosis and return-to-play decisions for concussion and other injuries, and fewer recurrent injuries.

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About The NFL Foundation: The National Football League Foundation is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the lives of those touched by the game of football – from players at all levels to communities across the country. The NFL Foundation represents the 32 NFL clubs and supports the health, safety and wellness of athletes, youth football, and the communities which support our game. For more information on The NFL Foundation, visit: www.NFLFoundation.org.

About NATA: National Athletic Trainers' Association (NATA) – Health Care for Life & Sport

Athletic trainers are health care professionals who specialize in the prevention, diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation of injuries and sport-related illnesses. They prevent and treat chronic musculoskeletal injuries from sports, physical and occupational activity, and provide immediate care for acute injuries. Athletic trainers offer a continuum of care that is unparalleled in health care. The National Athletic Trainers' Association represents and supports 39,000 members of the athletic training profession. Visit www.nata.org.

About Gatorade: The Gatorade Company, a division of PepsiCo (NYSE: PEP), provides sports performance innovations designed to meet the needs of athletes at all competitive levels and across a broad range of sports. Backed by a 50 year history of studying the best athletes in the world and grounded in years of hydration and sports nutrition research at the Gatorade Sports Science Institute, Gatorade provides scientifically formulated products to meet the sports fueling needs of athletes in all phases of athletic activity. For more information and a full list of products, please visit www.gatorade.com.

About PFATS: The Professional Football Athletic Trainers Society (PFATS) is a Professional Association representing the athletic trainers of the National Football League. We serve the players of the NFL, the member Clubs, and other members of the community. Our purpose is to insure the highest quality of health care is provided to the National Football League. We are dedicated to the welfare of our members and committed to the promotion and advancement of athletic training through education and research. The Society is founded on the professional integrity and the ethical standards of our members and the fellowship that exists among us. "PFATS cares to make a difference"