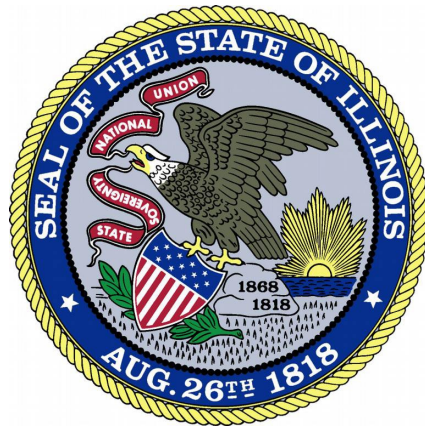


Governor's Office of Management and Budget

Alexis Sturm

Director



Regulatory Sunset Act Report on

The Illinois Athletic Trainers Practice Act

April 18, 2025

**To the Honorable JB Pritzker
Governor of Illinois**

Governor Pritzker:

As required by Section 5 of the Regulatory Sunset Act (5 ILCS 80/1 et seq.), GOMB facilitated a study with the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation's (IDFPR), the agency responsible for oversight of the Illinois Athletic Trainers Practice Act (225 ILCS 5/1 et seq.) (the Act), which is scheduled to be repealed on January 1, 2026. This report provides justification for the recommendation to continue this Act.

GOMB's examination of this Act was conducted considering the factors set out in Sections 6 and 7 of the Regulatory Sunset Act. The following report outlines the work of GOMB's study and details the criteria and data utilized to arrive at the above recommendation.

Respectfully,

Alexis Sturm
Director
Governor's Office of Management and Budget

GOMB Regulatory Sunset Act Report: Illinois Athletic Trainers Practice Act

The State of Illinois, acting through the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation (IDFPR or the Department), licenses the profession of athletic trainer pursuant to the Act. Athletic training involves the prevention, examination, treatment, and rehabilitation of emergent, acute, or chronic injuries incurred by athletes. Athletic trainers work under the written authorization of a physician, physician assistant, advanced practice registered nurse, podiatric physician, or dentist.

1. License Count and Fee Structure

As of March 29, 2024, IDFPR states that there are 2,279 currently active licenses for athletic trainers in Illinois. See the following table for the number of athletic trainer licenses issued by IDFPR in the fiscal years indicated:

License Type	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24
Athletic trainers	242	172	175	166	119

Athletic trainers have the following licensure fee structure:

License Type	Fee Amount	Online Payment
Application for license	\$200	No
License renewal fee	\$200	Yes

2. Obtaining Certification as an Athletic Trainer in Illinois

Obtaining Certification

To obtain certification, there is a paper-based application process that requires a license application, license fee, graduation from an athletic training program authorized by the Department, passage of an exam authorized by the Department to determine the applicant's fitness to practice as an athletic trainer, and current certification in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and automated external defibrillators (AED) for healthcare providers and professional rescuers.

Licensing and testing standards are established by the Act and by rule (68 Illinois Administrative Code, Part 1160). Athletic training programs accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education (CAATE), <https://caate.net/>, are approved by the Department in accordance with 68 Ill. Adm. Code 1160.31. The certification examination of the Board of Certification for the Athletic Trainer (BOC), <https://bocatc.org/>, is approved by the Department in accordance with 68 Ill. Adm. Code 1160.20.

As emphasized in Section 1 of the Act, " ... as a matter of public policy in the public interest, athletic trainers, as defined in this Act, merit and receive the understanding and confidence of the public and, to this end, that only qualified persons be permitted to hold themselves out to the public as athletic trainers in the State of Illinois." The provisions within the Act and the Rules have been modeled with the intent of ensuring the public's health, safety, and welfare are the principal focus. Illinois certifications closely mirror nationally accepted standards and to the Department has found these certifications to be sufficient in regulating the Athletic Trainers profession.

3. Equity Concerns

IDFPR states that equity issues may have an impact on individuals seeking to become a licensed athletic trainer in the State of Illinois. These issues include financial challenges such as the cost to obtain licensure and the failure to complete licensure due to access to training, education, and geographic location of training and testing sites.

Persons who speak English as a second language may also have difficulty with the licensure process. IDFPR asserts that it has done its best to minimize any barriers to licensure by requiring universally accepted qualification requirements and imposing fair standards of professionalism.

4. Agency recommendations to change the statute

IDFPR does not have amendatory recommendations for this Act. The Department is continuously monitoring the impact the current statutory language has on practitioners, while closely observing what changes can be made to better benefit the public.

68 Illinois Administrative Code, Part 1160 was last amended in January 2017 to update the name of an approved athletic training program and to clarify the temporary right to practice as an athletic trainer in Illinois. Additionally, the current limit on webinar continuing education was lifted in order to mirror the updated technological ways in which licensees complete continuing education. Technical and clean-up changes were also made.

5. Agency efforts to comply with enabling laws

At the time of this study, GOMB is not aware of any compliance issues by IDFPR related to the provisions of the Act.

6. Recent bills introduced by the General Assembly

According to IDFPR, there have been no statutory changes recently introduced by the General Assembly.

7. Stakeholder Feedback and Protocols for Athletic trainer Licensure

IDFPR did not report having received comments from professional organizations or other interested parties regarding the impact of its rules or administrative decisions related to enforcement of licensure of dental professionals. Further, IDFPR is not aware of any public feedback regarding licensure of athletic trainers.

8. Public Outreach

IDFPR provides multiple avenues for members of the public to contact the Department with comments or concerns about the programs it oversees or the Department's rules governing its programs. IDFPR conducts public outreach efforts through social media and other external-facing means.

9. Industry Standards

IDFPR states that the Illinois personal qualifications required for this profession are in line with industry

standards.

The nature of the Athletic Trainer profession allows practitioners a broad swath of options in how they can best aid the public health. The language of the Act provides acceptable methods of practice and gives licensees sufficient leeway to tailor their practice focus to potential and current public needs. This being the case, IDFPR does not suggest updating qualification standards or modes of practice.

10. Public Complaint Resolution

IDFPR has received seventeen complaints from the public regarding regulated athletic trainers over the past five fiscal years. The Department does not track complaints received from licensed athletic trainers. The Chief of Business Prosecutions is responsible for resolving complaints regarding IDFPR's regulation of the Illinois Athletic Trainers Practice Act. The average time for resolution of a complaint is six months. The table below outlines the number of complaints received by the Department in the last five years.

Complaints	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24
Athletic trainers	4	3	4	2	4

11. Disciplinary Action

IDFPR's authority to enforce the Act ensures that allegations of professional incompetence, gross negligence, malpractice, and unprofessional conduct are investigated and that substantiated allegations are prosecuted by the IDFPR for appropriate discipline.

12. Conclusion

The Act governs the licensure of athletic trainers in the State of Illinois. The absence of licensing criteria for athletic trainers would pose a significant and direct harm to the health, safety, and welfare of the public and specifically the State's healthcare system. The lack of regulation would eliminate the professional standards to which individuals who are a significant part of Illinois' healthcare system are held. IDFPR's authority under this Act protects the public's health, safety, and welfare by allowing IDFPR to review the qualifications of athletic trainers in Illinois to ensure that these individuals have completed the requisite education, examinations, and training to practice their profession with reasonable judgment, skill, and safety. The provisions within the Act and the Rules have been modeled with the intent of ensuring the public's health, safety, and welfare are the principal focus. The promulgated provisions of the Act and the Rules mitigate risk by establishing a basis for determining whether an applicant for licensure is fit to practice in Illinois.

Current evidence does not suggest that the imposition of the state's regulatory standards is such a burden as to outweigh the benefits to the health, safety, and welfare of the people of Illinois in continuing the licensure and regulation of this profession. Consequently, the Act is necessary and appropriate to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of the people of Illinois.

The Act should be continued to promote and enhance the safety and welfare of the public, without burdening licensees or commerce.