

# USA Gymnastics Sports Medicine Staff Member Guidelines

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## I. Overview

### **USA Gymnastics**

USA Gymnastics is the sole national governing body for the sport of gymnastics in the United States. This designation comes from the United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee and the International Gymnastics Federation (FIG). USA Gymnastics sets the rules and policies that govern gymnastics in the United States. The health, welfare and safety of our athletes is the top priority for the organization, USA Gymnastics Athlete Health and Wellness Council, and the USA Gymnastics sports medicine team.

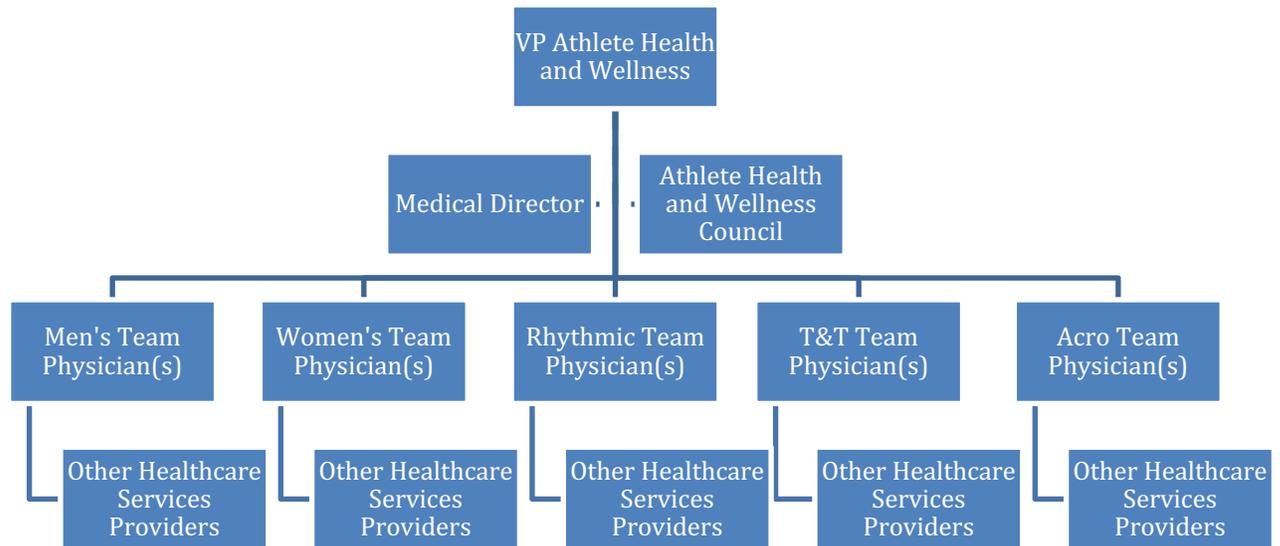
### **USA Gymnastics Athlete Health and Wellness Council**

The Athlete Health and Wellness Council is tasked by USA Gymnastics to ensure the medical needs of the gymnastics community within the United States are being met. The council is composed of the USA Gymnastics Vice President of Athlete Health and Wellness, USA Gymnastics Medical Director, representatives from USA Gymnastics medical staff, a program representative, athlete representatives, and an independent member. The council works to develop medical policy and procedures, review medical staff structure, establish position statements and educational content for the community, and oversee medical partnerships.

### **USA Gymnastics Sports Medicine Staff**

The USA Gymnastics sports medicine staff is responsible for the medical care of the USA Gymnastics National Team and developmental athletes. Several well-qualified members of the medical community serve on the medical staff. An overview of roles and responsibilities are included within this document with more specific requirements listed in the position description. In general, the USA Gymnastics medical staff will ensure that the health and safety needs of athletes participating in activities at any sanctioned USA Gymnastics National Team and developmental event or camp are adequately addressed. Each staff member will work in cooperation and as a team with the respective USA Gymnastics program leadership, the Vice President of Athlete Health and Wellness, the Medical Administrator, the Medical Director, and other medical staff members.

## Structure



## II. Guidelines for Sports Medicine Staff Members

### **USA Gymnastics Sports Medicine Team Philosophy**

USA Gymnastics strives to provide the best possible healthcare for the athletes it serves. The USA Gymnastics sports medicine team consists of licensed medical professionals who are experts in their fields and have an understanding of the sport of gymnastics. Guiding principles for the USA Gymnastics sports medicine staff include:

1. Foster an environment where the athlete's care and welfare are the priority and the medical staff serves as leaders promoting trust, communication, teamwork and use of all available resources for diagnosis and treatment.
2. Enhance the health and extend the performance of the athletes we serve by providing a positive and safe environment.
3. Prioritize injury prevention, immediate care of athletic injuries, rehabilitation and safe return to play from injury.

4. Serve the sport at the highest level; maintain a high standard of care, best practices, and professionalism at all times.
5. Provide leadership and educational resources for the gymnastics community in the area of athlete health, wellness, and athlete safety.
6. Recognize the expectations set forth by the United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee (USOPC), the International Gymnastics Federation (FIG), the IOC's Sports Medicine policies, and the USADA/WADA regulations.
7. Maintain a shared commitment to supporting the athletes' pursuit of competitive excellence.

### **General Requirements**

Sports Medicine Staff members must meet all current regulatory, licensing, insurance, and other requirements to practice and be in good standing with the appropriate state and/or national certifying boards. Proof of malpractice and liability coverage may be requested.

Sports Medicine Staff members are required to maintain USA Gymnastics Professional or Instructor Membership (depending on their role), which will be provided on a complimentary basis, and further requires satisfying all current membership requirements including licensing verification, SafeSport training, and successful completion of a criminal background check.

### **Medical Staff Designations & Requirements**

The following are the types of medical professionals that may serve on the USA Gymnastics sports medicine staff in a variety of different situations based on their skill sets and each individual program needs. Position descriptions for the roles below are available in separate documents.

#### **1. Certified Athletic Trainer (ATC)**

Certified athletic trainers are essential to providing sports medicine care to our athletes. Their standard training includes acute traumatic evaluation and care of the injured athlete, emergency and basic first-aid, rehabilitation exercise programs, use of therapeutic modalities, taping and bracing injuries, massage techniques, and nutritional concerns. This broad spectrum of knowledge allows the ATC to provide a vast range of services for the athlete and will be the main medical personnel to cover the floor at events.

#### **2. Physical Therapist (PT/DPT)**

Physical therapists are experts in assessment and rehabilitation of injuries and therapeutic modalities as well as manual care and treatment for functional and rehabilitation purposes. Those with the designation of Sports Clinical Specialist, evidence of ongoing sideline management of sporting events, and with a letter of reference from a sports medicine physician or athletic trainer/ first responder, may serve on the sidelines for emergency medical management as well.

### 3. Medical Physicians (MD, DO, Orthopaedic and/or Sports Medicine trained)

The medical physician is able to evaluate and diagnose an injury or illness. Their medical training and licensure allows them to prescribe medications, suture lacerations, perform minor procedures, splint fractures, reduce dislocations, diagnose psychiatric disorders, diagnose nutritional disorders, etc. At events, the physician traditionally directs sports medicine coverage and/or functions as a consultant for orthopedic and primary care medical needs.

Besides the 3 primary provider types, the sports medicine team can also include:

- Doctor of Chiropractic
- Sports Massage Therapists
- Acupuncturists
- Dietician
- Sports Psychologist/Mental Health Provider

### **Candidacy & Selection of USA Gymnastics Sports Medicine Staff**

Recruitment of new providers is essential to maintaining a high quality, trained medical staff for our athletes. Our full policy on Recruiting and Training New Medical Providers is available online with a summary below.

1. Responsibility - Serving as part of the sports medicine staff is a privilege that demands enormous responsibility. The sports medicine staff helps to maintain the health and wellness of our athletes and represents our country within the international medical community.

#### 2. Recruitment & Identification

Medical professionals are identified by the following:

- Professionals directly contact members of the sports medicine staff.
- Medical volunteers who perform well at USA Gymnastics national events.
- Consultants who help remotely with the care of our national team athletes.
- Recommendations from the gymnastics community, including program leadership, coaches, and athletes.
- Recommendations from other sports medicine programs including the USOPC, other NGBs, the NCAA, or national sports medicine organizations.

#### 3. Candidacy & Selection

- Medical professionals must submit a cover letter and resume to [medicalvolunteer@usagym.org](mailto:medicalvolunteer@usagym.org)

- The Vice President of Athlete Health and Wellness will review the candidate to verify the professional meets all the medical staff requirements.
- Submission will be reviewed by the VP of Athlete Health and Wellness, the Medical Director, and program leadership to determine if the candidate fulfills a program coverage need.
- If approved, the candidate will be required to complete a membership application for USAG including a background check and Safe Sport training.
- Once completed, candidate will be assigned to a camp or event where they will work with established program providers.
- The candidate will work with current medical staff members and will be evaluated on their medical knowledge, professionalism, and ability to interact with athletes, coaches, staff and other event or camp personnel.
- The evaluation period may extend to additional camps/events and may include service at one of the USA Gymnastics premier events.
- A candidate's evaluation period will ideally be no less than one year and include at least three USA Gymnastics events and/or activities.
- At the conclusion of the evaluation period, the candidate is eligible for recommendation.
- Inclusion in the medical staff will be a joint decision between the Vice Present of Athlete Health and Wellness, USA Gymnastics Medical Director, the program medical staff, athletes and program leadership.

### **III. Medical Team Duties**

#### **Program Specific Needs**

Each discipline of USA Gymnastics has varying medical needs. These differences are based on a variety of factors including the number of annual events, number of participants, structure of developmental/elite program, inherent athletic qualities optimal for athletes in each discipline, average age of the athletes, frequency of competition and international travel, type and frequency of common injuries, rehabilitation needs, etc. Based on those program specific needs, each discipline requires different numbers and types of medical personnel to best serve their needs.

Details of each medical provider's role are provided in a position description. A general overview of expectations for all medical team members is provided here.

#### **Communication/Documentation**

##### **1. Communication**

Communication among all parties is critical to maintaining the health and wellness of our athletes. The sports medicine staff serves as a liaison between the athlete, coach, parent, program staff, and other medical professionals as appropriate.

## 2. Documentation Review

The following forms, when available, should be reviewed by the medical staff. These forms may be required by athletes competing at National Team events and/or camps:

- Medical History
- Physical Evaluation form (National Team Members)
- HIPAA release
- Consent to treat

## 3. Medical Documentation

- Overall documentation includes a combination of paper and/or electronic medical documentation and is program-specific.
- Medical Evaluation:
  - All medical assessments and treatments are formally documented.
  - The form of documentation will vary and be program specific. May include paper documentation, electronic medical record, or a combination of both.
- Injury Evaluation:
  - Two levels of documentation are required for all injuries that occur at sanctioned events or camps:
    - Injury assessment via program-specific paper or electronic medical documentation
    - USA Gymnastics Injury Incident Report Form or FIG Injury Report Form (for FIG sanctioned events)

## Camps and Events

Basic duties for medical professionals at camps and competitions are outlined below. This is not an exhaustive list of duties, rather, a general overview of the scope of services:

- Attend all assigned training and competition sessions.
- Provide on-call overnight care to athletes as requested and appropriate.
- Attend to all medical needs of the athletes, as appropriate.
- Provide treatment and injury maintenance in a timely manner.
- Complete all relevant USA Gymnastics medical documentation
- Take part in coordination of care as part of a multidisciplinary approach.
- Work collaboratively with Local Organizing Committee medical staff, when applicable.
- Monitor the availability of appropriate medical supplies.
- Review the content and work within the construct of the medical manual and emergency action plans for each camp or event.
- Adhere to all SafeSport regulations and policies
- International Travel:

- Review relevant Centers for Disease Control infectious disease & vaccine updates for region of travel.
- Communicate with Local Organizing Committee medical staff to review medical setup, supplies, services, and emergency action plans applicable to the venue and country.
- Ensure appropriate athlete documentation regarding Therapeutic Use Exemptions and serve as athlete advocate during doping procedures.
- Work with USA Gymnastics administration to maintain a current FIG medical practitioner certification.
- Review medical needs of the athletes and delegation prior to travel.
- Be available for the medical needs of the delegation as a whole.

- **Other Duties and Responsibilities**

Medical staff members are expected to promote an environment of health and wellness within the gymnastics community and adhere to policies and procedures put forward by the USA Gymnastics Athlete Health and Wellness Council (AHWC). The medical staff may also be recruited by the AHWC to help develop and execute medical policies & procedures and contribute to the development of educational content for the gymnastics community.

Medical staff members are required to maintain confidentiality of an athlete's protected health information. Although USAG is not a covered entity under HIPAA, medical staff members should follow all HIPAA safeguards.

## **IV. Resources**

### **USA Gymnastics University**

USA Gymnastics University is a collection of resources for gymnastics education. Its mission is to provide a multi-level, standardized education that is available throughout the country with emphasis on the proper development of gymnastics participants in a positive and safe environment. The University provides educational opportunities for coaches, instructors, teachers, judges, and administrators at all levels and in all disciplines of gymnastics. The USA Gymnastics sports medicine staff may be asked to contribute to the University, including to one of the University's core requirements - the Safety/Risk Management Certification course, which is mandated for all professional members. USA Gymnastics University:

<https://www.usagym.org/pages/education/pages/>

### **U.S. Anti-Doping Agency**

Members of the U.S. National Team are subject to policies and procedures established by the United States Anti-Doping Agency (USADA), the FIG, the International Olympic Committee (IOC), the USOC, and the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA). The list of banned substances or policies and procedures may change from time-to-time and athletes have an obligation to stay informed about changes communicated by any of the aforementioned organizations. Athletes within the registered testing pool may potentially be subject to periodic unannounced drug tests, as required by WADA, USADA, the USOC, IOC or the FIG.

National Medical Staff members should familiarize themselves with anti-doping requirements and serve as a resource for athletes and coaches. Medical staff members have a duty to consult the respective banned substance lists prior to administering ANY medicine to athletes, whether prescription or over the counter.

*USADA website:* [www.usantidoping.org](http://www.usantidoping.org).

*World Anti-Doping Program website:* [www.wada-ama.org](http://www.wada-ama.org)

*Global Drug Reference Online:* [www.globaldro.com](http://www.globaldro.com)

### **Additional Resources**

- United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee
- True Sport: <http://truesport.org/>
- Healthy Roster (Electronic Medical Record)
- American Medical Society for Sports Medicine: <https://www.amssm.org/>
- American College of Sports Medicine: <https://www.acsm.org>

## **V. Conduct and Responsibility**

### **USA Gymnastics Policy and Procedure**

Medical professionals serving under USA Gymnastics auspices must adhere to all USA Gymnastics policies and procedures, including, but not limited to:

- Code of Ethical Conduct
- Safe Sport Policy
- SafeSport Code for the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movement
- Professional Membership

USA Gymnastics medical staff members have an obligation to familiarize themselves with these policies. Violation of any USA Gymnastics rule, policy, or procedure may warrant dismissal from the National Medical Staff. The VP of Athlete Health and Wellness will oversee disciplinary matters.

### **Safe Sport Guidelines**

All staff members are expected to follow the USA Gymnastics leadership approved and adopted Safe Sport Policy, which significantly strengthened the organization's approach to athlete safety. The Safe Sport Policy is mandatory and requires all members to comply with the mandates therein. All members of USA Gymnastics, including medical team members, are mandatory reporters and must immediately report child abuse of any kind to local law enforcement and to Safe Sport.

Link to USA Gymnastics Safe Sport Policy:

<https://usagym.org/pages/education/safesport/policy.html>

### **Medical Obligations**

Medical staff members have a duty of care, which includes acting in a professional manner to safeguard the privacy, dignity and well-being of individuals under their care, and to comply with all HIPAA laws regarding confidentiality.

Any action or inaction that leads to loss of license, medical certification, etc., as determined by the appropriate governing board, will also result in removal from USA Gymnastics Medical Staff.

In the event a medical staff member's treatment or care is called into question, USA Gymnastics reserves the right to review the matter.