

## “Perception of Employers Regarding Athletic Trainers within the Occupational Setting”

NATA FOUNDATION DOCTORAL RESEARCH GRANT: 2024-2025



**FUNDING:** \$2,477

**FUNDED BY:** Darren L. Johnson, MD Doctoral Research Endowment

### PROJECT SUMMARY

With current state regulations and the recent push for the federal heat standard, many companies will need to employ medical personnel on-site to implement and enforce heat mitigation strategies centered on prevention, recognition, and treatment of heat-related illness. Athletic trainers are ideally and uniquely skilled and educated to fill this need. To properly quantify the needs of the employment of athletic trainers in the occupational setting, understanding how health and safety managers view the value and role of athletic trainers is important to educate other personnel of an athletic trainer’s scope of practice. This research will be conducted through consensual qualitative research via Qualtrics and a semi-structured interview guide. A semi-structured interview guide will be used and developed by the research team and consist of a series of questions related to the value of an athletic trainer in the occupational setting as well as current heat mitigation strategies that exist. The desired outcomes from this study could result in athletic trainers leading the formation of workplace heat safety standards that will reduce heat related illnesses and deaths and yield millions in cost-savings related to wrongful death litigation, workman’s comp claims, and medical related expenses in addition to opening more industrial athletic training jobs.

### IMPACT ON THE ATHLETIC TRAINING PROFESSION

This study proposes to increase awareness of the athletic trainer’s value among key stakeholders, grow inter-professional partnerships, and to better the understanding of the athletic trainer’s impact in this employment setting, all of which may help to support professional and self-advocacy.



PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:

### CECILIA KAUFMAN

**UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT, KOREY STRINGER INSTITUTE**

Cecilia Kaufman joined the Korey Stringer Institute as a Graduate Assistant in the Fall of 2021 and currently serves as the President of the Heat Safety and Performance Coalition and the Director of Occupational Safety. Her current research interests include examining wearable technology to monitor core body temperature, psychosocial factors following injury, advocating for the Athletic Trainer’s role in healthcare, and thermal stress surrounding the physically active population- including athletes and warfighters, with an emphasis on laborers.

Cecilia received her Bachelor’s degree from University of Michigan in Athletic Training in Spring of 2021. During her time at University of Michigan, she worked clinically with a variety of varsity U-M teams. After receiving her undergraduate degree, she worked for Michigan Performance and Research Laboratory as a Research Assistant during the Summer of 2021. Cecilia graduated with her Master’s degree in Kinesiology with a concentration in Exercise Science at UCONN in Spring 2023. During her Master’s degree, she worked as an Athletic Trainer for the Capitol Region Education Council schools, and as Graduate Research Assistant at KSI. Cecilia continued here education at UCONN to pursue her Ph.D. beginning in Fall 2023. She has since been involved in several research projects surrounding heat stress within the occupational setting and serves as the Secretary-Elect of the Thermal Stress Working Group within the American Industrial Hygiene Association.