

Athletic Trainers in a Physician Practice Concussion Clinic Model

What role does an athletic trainer serve in a Concussion Clinic?

Athletic trainers (ATs) working in a physician practice setting have been seen as a valuable asset in both increasing revenue and patient satisfaction. Athletic trainers have a particularly unique role specifically in a concussion clinic because their educational background in prevention, recognition, and treatment of concussions. This also includes an ATs ability to administer and interpret a battery of cognitive testing used in concussion management.

What type of testing can an ATC administer in the physician clinic?

Testing provides insight on patient's deficits and can help guide the plan of care to the areas where the patient is struggling the most. It is also a good way to show progress and support shifts in treatment strategies.

The three most common tests administered (and corresponding E&M codes) include:

Impact (96120) - ImPACT provides trained clinicians with neurocognitive assessment tools and services that have been medically accepted as state-of-the-art best practices as part of determining safe return to play decisions.

Sway Balance (92065) - Sway Balance measures stability using the built in motion sensors of any iOS mobile device to quantify postural sway. While the device is pressed against the chest, a proprietary motion analysis algorithm calculates stability and provides an easy to understand value on a 100 point scale with 100 being completely stable and 0 being unstable

King Devick (92065) - The King–Devick Test (K–D Test) is defined by Mosby's Medical Dictionary as a tool for evaluation of saccade, consisting of a series of test cards of numbers. The test cards become progressively more difficult to read due to variability of spacing between the numbers. Both errors in reading and speed of reading are included in deriving a score. Saccades are quick, simultaneous movements of both eyes.

In what other ways can an athletic trainer function within a Concussion Clinic?

Obtain History of Present Illness (HPI)

ACE - Acute concussion evaluation - This form includes HPI, symptom check list, concussion history, and brief medical history.

Coordinate Plan of Care

Putting the plan of care into action is essential to the patient's recovery. Most of these tasks take place after the office visit. Completing these tasks lets the physician move on to the next patient. Freeing up the physician's time to see more patients will directly impact the clinic's revenue.

Find locations for Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Cognitive rehabilitation

Facilitating the patient's aftercare is extremely important to recovery. Also, establishing relationships with healthcare providers for outside services (such as physical and cognitive therapy) enables cohesive care for the patient.

How can an athletic trainer indirectly contribute to physician throughput in clinic?

Administration of Cognitive Testing

Impact - 96120
Sway Balance - 92065
King Devick – 92065

Increased patient volume

Testing = 30-45 minutes
HPI = 15-20 minutes
Total time 50-65 minutes that physician can spend with other patients

How does increased throughput generate increased revenue for physicians?

For example, new clinic patients would have both an evaluation code and one or more cognitive testing codes associated with their visit. Because of the extensive amount of counseling for a new concussion the visit is coded for a level 5 new patient (99205). The charts below compare the RVUw for a new concussion visit with a new orthopedic visit. A new concussion visit is 3 more RVUw than a new orthopedic visit.

Visit Type & CPT	RVUw
New concussion 99205 -	3.17
Impact - 96120	0.51
Sway Balance 92065	0.37
King Devick 92065	0.37
Total:	4.42

Visit Type and CPT	RVUw
Ortho NP 99203	1.42

Total	1.42
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New Concussion is 3 more RVU's per patient.

As per medicare rates - 99205 \$124.74 vs 99203 \$40.07

Besides direct patient care, how can an athletic trainer affect physician throughput?

While not all tasks AT's perform in a clinic are directly billable, tasks handled by the AT's helps free physician time to see additional patients, chart, dictate, bill ect. These responsibilities affect clinic revenue in downstream manner. Examples of downstream effects include the following:

Scheduling

The ability to line up the right patients with the right providers increases productivity and patient satisfaction. AT's utilize clinical background to develop, maintain, and navigate comprehensive triage algorithms to allow patients timely access to the appropriate provider. Additionally AT's can coordinate care with typically "hard to reach" providers For example, formal neuropsychology scheduling can take upwards of 3-9 months to secure appointments. AT's working in concussion clinic may have access to scheduling or have priority to schedule which can greatly reduce wait time.

Building Community Relationships

The ability to build relationships with community members external to the practice (schools, sports orgs, etc) expands the awareness of AT's involvement in concussion clinics to outside health care systems. There is also the potential to lead the formation of strategic partnerships in the community by educating clubs, school, groups, teams, ect with orthopedic/ concussion specific information. Additionally could organize and facilitate youth "baseline testing nights" increasing clinic exposure and downstream revenue.

Complete Administrative Duties

- Document accommodations for work, school, daily activities
- Phone calls - counseling patients and parents between visits.
- Emails - returning email to other providers regarding care or changes in treatment strategies

Athletic trainers can perform a multitude of tasks in a concussion clinic that are vital to both clinic revenue and patient care. These tasks range from administering cognitive testing, to coordinating patient aftercare, to handling administrative tasks. All of these responsibilities are critical to running a successful, profitable concussion clinic.