

Consensus statement describes role of team physicians

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(HealthDay)—Team physicians have medical and administrative duties and responsibilities to athletes, according to a consensus statement published in the August issue of *Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise*.

Stanley A. Herring, M.D., chair of the consensus statement writing group and one of the team physicians for the Seattle Seahawks and Seattle Mariners, and colleagues updated the 2000 statement and described the definition, qualifications, education, duties, and responsibilities of team physicians.

According to the report, the team physician must be a medical doctor or doctor of osteopathy, with an unrestricted license to practice [medicine](#). Team physicians should have fundamental knowledge of on-field

medical emergency care, be trained in basic cardiopulmonary resuscitation and automated defibrillator use, and have a working knowledge of musculoskeletal injuries and of the medical conditions and psychological issues that relate to athletes. The team physician should be available and accessible and maintain sport-specific knowledge and experience. The team physician is expected to be involved in medical and administrative aspects of team care. Medical care includes establishing a chain of command for managing injury and illness, making final decisions on fitness and return-to-play, and understanding the issues that affect athletic performance. Administrative duties include development of emergency plans and being aware of other aspects of sideline and event preparedness. Team physicians should be aware of the unique ethical challenges and medicolegal issues.

"A team physician is uniquely qualified to offer the best care to an athlete of any level," Herring said in a statement. "Their education, training, and experience, combined with their ongoing relationship with their team, allow them to offer the best possible care to the athletes under their supervision."

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