

District III Membership:

Our profession is at a critical crossroads, the next few years will determine the future of our profession. Our profession has a shortage of athletic trainers which is causing position vacancies to go unfilled, interest in association membership has declined for a variety of reasons, membership decline has or will lead to financial struggles for our district, national, and state associations, and academic programs are struggling to recruit students to enter the profession. These are some of the issues facing our profession. Each one of us has a decision to make. Are we going to sit back and complain about things or are we going to become advocates for ourselves and the profession?

I am a running to be the next Mid-Atlantic District III President because I want to be an advocate for our profession and each of us. If elected, I will: 1) work towards balancing the District III budget over the next three years, 2) continue to facilitate discussions between state leaders that foster collaboration between the states and District of Columbia to strengthen athletic training across District III, 3) be a resource for state leadership and members to reach their goals, and 4) encourage grassroots efforts to improve membership involvement and third party reimbursement.

Most of my professional service has been at the state and district levels, I have served at these levels in varying capacities throughout my career. My most notable professional service included serving as the President-Elect, President, and Past President of the Virginia Athletic Trainers' Association (VATA) from 2015-2020. I currently serve as a member of the VATA Research Committee. In 2022, I received the NATA Service Award for the professional service I've provided at the local, state, and district levels.

The following accomplishments occurred while I was the VATA President:

1. Stabilized the association's finances through many initiatives.
2. Established a task force to develop a path to develop future leaders in our profession and the VATA to increase membership involvement.
3. Established a task force to continue working on third party reimbursement in the Commonwealth.
4. Reorganized the regions of the VATA to balance membership numbers across regions to foster better representation.
5. Changed the VATA Constitution & By-Laws to allow for online voting to foster better membership involvement and how region representative were elected.
6. Began an annual symposium geared toward Secondary School issues.
7. Began hosting or sponsoring continuing education opportunities in each region of the Commonwealth to better serve the membership.
8. Increased membership involvement on committees.

I'm very proud to have collaborated with VATA leaders from across the Commonwealth to accomplish goals focused on strengthening our association and profession. The accomplishments, challenges, and lessons I've learned throughout my career have prepared me to be the next District President.

Sincerely,

Matt Gage