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NEW NFL FOUNDATION GRANT PROGRAM TO EXPAND HIGH SCHOOL ACCESS TO ATHLETIC TRAINERS

*Up to 150 grants to be Awarded to Eligible High Schools in
Arizona, Illinois, Oklahoma and Oregon*

The NFL Foundation, in collaboration with Gatorade, the National Athletic Trainers' Association (NATA), the Korey Stringer Institute (KSI) and the Professional Football Athletic Trainers Society (PFATS), today announced the launch of a pilot program to provide funding to public high schools with football programs that have limited or no access to an athletic trainer. This program is an expansion of the athletic trainer initiatives developed and implemented by the NFL Foundation and its partners over the past two years.

The NFL Foundation will award up to 150 grants to high schools in the four pilot states. Each grant will be in the amount of \$35,000 awarded over a three-year period to fund an athletic training program. The number of grants provided will be at the discretion of an appointed review panel.

"The NFL is committed to enhancing the safety of football at all levels," said NFL Commissioner **ROGER GOODELL**. "We are proud of the important work that athletic trainers do on the sidelines and in training facilities nationwide. We look forward to testing this pilot program as part of our effort to increase access to athletic trainers in local communities and improve sports safety for many more young athletes."

"The NFL Foundation is proud that this athletic trainer pilot program, one that was originally developed at the club level, is expanding to serve more young athletes," said NFL Foundation Chairman **CHARLOTTE JONES ANDERSON**. "NFL teams have long seen the value of athletic trainers' knowledge, and experience when it comes to health and safety and this program will help provide that same expertise at the high school level."

An athletic trainer is a licensed medical professional who has specific expertise in preventing, recognizing, treating and rehabilitating athletic injuries. However, nearly two-thirds of high schools across the country lack a full-time athletic trainer and almost thirty percent of high schools do not have any athletic trainer at all. This pilot program will test ways in which to address this issue.

"The National Athletic Trainers' Association is committed to enhancing the quality of health care that young athletes receive through access to athletic trainers," said NATA President **SCOTT SAILOR**, EdD, ATC. "Together, we can ensure best practices are put in place in underserved schools, to reduce risk of injury and make sports safer for all communities."

This pilot program builds on the NFL Foundation's athletic trainer grant program established two years ago to help NFL teams increase access to athletic trainers in their communities. To date, 20 NFL clubs have utilized these grants to support local schools and leagues. This program has underscored the need for funding for athletic trainers and provided useful insight into potential methods of addressing this need.

“For more than 50 years, we’ve been committed to athletes’ safety, performance and success – and based on this experience, we know how important athletic trainers are to our mission,” said **JEFF KEARNEY**, head of Gatorade Sports Marketing. “We’re excited to build on the success of our 2015 efforts and believe this program is an important part of our overall commitment to helping ensure the safety of the more than eight million high school athletes in the U.S.”

The Korey Stringer Institute will lead the administration of the grant program and conduct research to assess the impact of the pilot program and the effect of athletic trainers on student athlete health outcomes.

“The massive responsibility of keeping many hundreds of athletes safe at a particular high school should never be the responsibility of a sport coach or the athletic director, they have no training to properly handle this task,” said KSI Chief Executive Officer **DOUGLAS CASA**, PhD, ATC, FNAK, FACSM, FNATA. “We are very proud to partner with this grant program that has a primary goal of increasing the number of schools serviced by an athletic trainer and to enhance the amount of medical care for those that already have some.”

“The Professional Football Athletic Trainers Society is proud to partner with the NFL Foundation, NATA and Gatorade to increase the number of athletic trainers available to high school students across the country,” said **RICK BURKHOLDER**, MS, ATC, PFATS president and head athletic trainer of the Kansas City Chiefs.

Further information on the program and the grant process and eligibility can be found at:
www.athletictrainergrant.com.

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About The NFL Foundation: The National Football League Foundation is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the lives of those touched by the game of football – from players at all levels to communities across the country. The NFL Foundation represents the 32 NFL clubs and supports the health, safety and wellness of athletes, youth football, and the communities that support our game. For more information on The NFL Foundation, visit: www.NFLFoundation.org.

About NATA: National Athletic Trainers’ Association (NATA) - Health Care for Life & Sport – Athletic trainers are health care professionals who specialize in the prevention, diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation of injuries and sport-related illnesses. They prevent and treat chronic musculoskeletal injuries from sports, physical and occupational activity and provide immediate care for acute injuries. Athletic trainers offer a continuum of care that is unparalleled in health care. The National Athletic Trainers' Association represents and supports 44,000 members of the athletic training profession. Visit www.nata.org. To learn more about how athletic trainers are uniquely qualified to mitigate risk visit www.atyourownrisk.org, NATA’s public awareness campaign designed to educate, provide resources and equip the public to act and advocate for safety in work, life and sport.

About Gatorade: The Gatorade Company, a division of PepsiCo (NYSE: PEP), provides sports performance innovations designed to meet the needs of athletes at all competitive levels and across a broad range of sports. Backed by a 50 year history of studying the best athletes in the world and grounded in years of hydration and sports nutrition research at the Gatorade Sports Science Institute, Gatorade provides scientifically formulated products to meet the sports fueling needs of athletes in all phases of athletic activity. For more information and a full list of products, please visit www.gatorade.com.

About KSI: The Korey Stringer Institute (KSI) is housed in the Department of Kinesiology within the College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources at the University of Connecticut (UConn). UConn’s Department of Kinesiology has a strong tradition and reputation as one of the leading institutions studying health and safety issues for athletes and the physically active. The mission of KSI is to provide research, education, advocacy and

consultation to maximize performance, optimize safety and prevent sudden death for the athlete, soldier and laborer. For more information, visit: www.ksi.uconn.edu.

About PFATS: The Professional Football Athletic Trainers Society (PFATS) is a Professional Association representing the athletic trainers of the National Football League. We serve the players of the NFL, the member Clubs, and other members of the community. Our purpose is to insure the highest quality of health care is provided to the National Football League. We are dedicated to the welfare of our members and committed to the promotion and advancement of athletic training through education and research. The Society is founded on the professional integrity and the ethical standards of our members and the fellowship that exists among us. "PFATS cares to make a difference."

Contacts:

NFL: Catherine Boyle, 212/450-2162; catherine.boyle@nfl.com

NATA / PFATS: Robin Waxenberg, 212/489-8006; robin@robwax.com

Ellen Satlof, 972/532-8859; ellen@nata.org

Gatorade: Katherine Montiel, 312/821-2859; katherine.montiel@pepsico.com

KSI: Rebecca Stearns, 860/486-0275; rebecca.stearns@uconn.edu