

Boston's Arts Revival and Athletes and the Arts

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Boston recently hosted the annual conference of the American College of Sports Medicine and while attendees were in town, members of the Performing Arts Medicine Alliance (PAMA) and Athletes for the Arts (AATA) took advantage of that fact and connected with local arts leaders to explore potential collaboration and partnerships.

The timing was auspicious. The City of Boston, long known as a hub for innovation, sports champions, and a highly respected medical sector, is now undergoing an arts renaissance. Boston is under new mayoral leadership for the first time in over twenty years, Mayor Martin J. Walsh has dramatically increased municipal arts funding, hired a new Chief of Arts and Culture and led the creation of [Boston Creates](#), a cultural plan for the city. As far back as his days as a candidate for mayor, Walsh had a clearly articulated cultural policy platform: "Boston's artists of all disciplines, ages, and backgrounds are central to Marty's planned Artists First Initiative. This initiative will address artists' occupational health needs, professional development, affordable artist space, fair trade, and compensation." After a year-long participatory process, the Boston Creates plan was released in mid June and the Mayor announced a number of new programs and additional investment focused on supporting artists, a major goal of the plan.

While in Boston, members of PAMA and AATA worked with the Mayor's Office of Arts and Culture and the Massachusetts Artists Leaders Coalition ([MALC](#)) to produce a free panel discussion at the Boston Public Library where musicians, physicians and therapists shared information and discussed issues such as injuries, recovery, health insurance coverage, and best practices. The following day these same folks met to discuss how to take action with local arts advocates, policy leaders, union leaders, and legislators. Follow ups will include members of AATA, ACSM, PAMA reviewing any local legislation developed in Boston and Massachusetts, musicians will write blogs for AATA website about selected health issues currently being addressed by the union; and AATA and PAMA members will provide links to websites that can populate the forthcoming Boston Artists Resource website, hotline and desk that will be located in City Hall.

There are a whole host of best practices that can be followed by artists, instructors, schools and parents as well as the medical field, to prevent or minimize injuries, promote healing and recovery. The expectation is that this collaborative effort will lead to the creation of formal wellness and occupational health program for the artists of Boston, so that they can have long a fruitful careers as healthy creators.