

Lansing Lobby Day

February 13, 2020

Occupational Therapy and Autism: The CDC estimates that the current rates of Autism Spectrum Disorder occur in 1 of every 59 children. In the last 5 years, Michigan has mandated medical insurers to cover the diagnosis and treatment of children with Autism. While many new professions available to treat clients with Autism, Occupational therapists have been treating clients with Autism for over 70 years. Occupational therapists are trained medical professionals who's scope of practice focuses on all aspects of the child's developmentally appropriate skills including play, self-care, sensory processing, motor development, social engagement, feeding, and parent training. We do so to help children, adolescents, and adults with Autism engage in occupations as family members, students and life-long learners, and skilled workers. MiOTA advocates that Autism treatment in the state of Michigan follow best practice standards by using multidisciplinary teams and treatment methods.

House Bill 4108: As a Mandated Reporter, a professional is required by law to report suspected child abuse to Child Protective Services. We believe it is reasonable to add Occupational Therapy and Occupational Therapy Assistants to this bill. This bill recently passed through the Michigan House of Representatives with the addition of Physical Therapists and Physical Therapy Assistants to the roster of mandated reporters. Occupational Therapists and Occupational Therapy Assistants work with a wide of variety of pediatric clients in home, school, and clinic environments. MiOTA supports passing House Bill 4108 with the inclusion of Occupational Therapists and Occupational Therapy Assistants.

Auto No-Fault Reforms: Last year, Michigan passed reformed on our state's Auto No-Fault insurance policies. Many of the changes will take effect in the summer of 2020. There were many complex changes, not limited to, but including medical provider fee-schedules, policies offering reduced personal injury protection (PIP), and hourly limitations to in-home family attendant care. When these changes take place, we want to stress the importance of clients' continued access to Occupational Therapy services for Michigan residents injured in an automobile accident have continued access to occupational therapy services. We want to ensure that citizens of Michigan who have sustained injuries due to an automobile accident receive rehabilitation and Occupational Therapy services at the right time, in the right amount, for the right duration.

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Three topics to discuss:

- **Who are we?** Occupational therapy practitioners / students
 - Ask him/her if they are familiar with OT. If so, encourage them to share an experience.
 - Provide a brief summary of our profession. Keep this in terms of their constituents as your clients. For example, say something like, *“I provide outpatient rehab services to young children. Many of the people I work with live near Big Star Lake. My job is to help your constituents grow and develop into productive members of society.”* This gives us a common connection and shows him/her that you are dedicated to our mutual community.
 - Be sure to inform them of the settings that we work. Be sure to list settings like acute care in hospitals, in-patient and out-patient rehabilitation, in-home care, school-based settings.
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- **How we can help?** Occupational Therapy and Autism / HB 4108 / Auto No-Fault
 - Tell him/her that you are here to advocate for the consumers of Occupational Therapy and for the Occupational Therapy Profession as providers of care for clients with Autism
 - Inform him/her that there is a body of research that shows occupational therapy for clients with Autism Spectrum Disorders is beneficial.
 - Hand him/her the Rack Card, Lansing Lobby Day 2020 handout, and AOTA’s Autism Fact Sheet
 - Provide a personal example of how Occupational Therapy has benefitted someone you know with Autism and/or someone with Autism in their district. These personalized stories drive the point home and are important to legislators. *(if you are in a group, discuss with group members experiences they may have)*
- **What are our concerns?**
 - MiOTA supports Occupational Therapy evaluations and treatment of people with Autism spectrum disorders include developmentally appropriate skills including play and leisure, activities of daily living and self-care, sensory processing, motor development, social engagement, feeding, and parent training that are within our scope of practice.
 - We want to see HB 4108 passed through the Michigan House and Senate with Occupational Therapists and Occupational Therapy Assistants listed as Mandatory Reporters of suspected child abuse and/or child neglect.
 - We encourage lawmakers to ensure that proposed and enacted Auto No-Fault policies have limited impact patient’s opportunities and access to appropriate, quality medical care. It is important that Michigan residents injured in an automobile accident have continued access to reasonable and necessary occupational therapy services because we are the only health profession that has evidence to demonstrate that our services can reduce readmissions. MiOTA wants to ensure that citizens of Michigan who have sustained injuries due to an automobile accident receive rehabilitation and Occupational Therapy services at the right time, in the right amount for the right duration.