



Michigan Occupational Therapy Association

May 19, 2020

Dear Governor Whitmer:

On behalf of the Michigan Occupational Therapy Association (MiOTA), we submit this letter of thanks for the updated Medicaid policy 2029, allowing Medicaid beneficiaries to receive occupational therapy services via telemedicine services during the COVID-19 state of emergency.

As you know, this pandemic has put many strains on Michigan families and their access to health care across our great state. Some hospitals have reduced therapy staff to limit exposure and reduce costs. Businesses and educational settings where many occupational therapists work, such as outpatient clinics and schools, have shut down in accordance with your executive orders to protect their clients, students, and staff. By including occupational therapy practitioners as providers of telemedicine, we can continue to support and improve the health care of Michiganders across the state. The updated policy supports clients across the lifespan with a multitude of conditions, in addition to allowing therapists the tools to treat Michigan's recovering COVID-19 survivors when they are appropriate for telemedicine therapy.

Occupational therapists are medical professionals with extensive training in skilled physical, cognitive, and psycho-social interventions to promote rehabilitation and habilitation across the lifespan.

Occupational therapy enables people of all ages to live life to its fullest by helping them participate in the daily activities that they want and need to do. In the era of COVID-19, occupational therapists are more important than ever to support survivors in their journey to completely recover and resume the necessary occupations in their individual lives.

As our great state moves through and beyond the current medical pandemic, MiOTA would like you to consider expanding telemedicine services for occupational therapy services permanently as a means of improving access to care. Telemedicine is an effective tool to ensure the health and safety of beneficiaries. When beneficiaries can receive occupational therapy care through telemedicine and face to face services, our state addresses the equitability and accessibility of care to serve consumers throughout the diverse communities of Michigan. By allowing occupational therapists to use telemedicine as a part of their practice we can improve personalized care and treatment for our clients during their course of therapy during this difficult time and beyond.

Our members are thankful to have the opportunity to utilize telemedicine to support our clients. On behalf of those clients, thank you.

Sincerely,

Cathleen C. Johnson, OTD, OTRL, FMiOTA

MiOTA Leader of Executive Committee

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MiOTA Advocacy Director