

## MiOTA, Southwest Chapter Meeting 9/13/18 Summary

Attendance of **23** at the Rider-Sammons Residence from 6:00-7:30 pm. Thank you again to our gracious hosts, Barb and Fred!

The meeting started with 30 minutes of networking and dinner, then:

1. Our speaker, Margaret O'Brien, Michigan State Senator for the 20<sup>th</sup> district/Kalamazoo and Portage area, shared information about how to contact our state senators and representatives, how to get involved in the political process both as a volunteer or running for a position, and shared some stories about bills that have affected our profession in the past.

She encouraged each one of us to get to know our state senators and representatives now before we have a bill or an issue that will affect our profession. Share what you do and what you are expert at with your local representatives. When an issue comes up and a legislator needs information, he or she will often begin by reaching out to people he or she already knows who are experts in that area. Sometimes the legislator may not even know that a bill will affect OTs, but if you have a relationship, you are in a position to educate before it is too late. Key point: Margaret said, "My job is not to solve all your problems, but to know and connect you to who can."

Currently, there is a potential legislation to move MD and RN licensure from the state to a national licensure process. This is likely to have a trickle-down effect to other health care fields, including ours.

This election season, if someone running for office knocks on your door, talk to them. They love it when people ask questions or share their concerns. Many new bills arise from the home district when a legislator is made aware of a need or issue. She also shared that if you do write to or call your legislator, create a personal message instead of using a form letter. You are more likely to get a personal response. Also, take the time to share with them when you are happy! Legislators get a lot of angry mail and feedback, and it is refreshing to hear when someone is appreciative about an action they have taken.

She also encouraged all of us to get involved by volunteering for someone who is running for office or running for a position. Volunteering may be as little as a couple hours one day knocking on doors or making phone calls. There are many local positions to run for such as school boards, city council, etc. Right now females are definitely in the minority. A lot of women are intimidated by trying to balance family, career, and office. Margaret has learned to balance her career, senate duties, and family commitments by making every minute of her day count. It is possible to make it work.

Claudette Reid, a fellow OT and Portage City Council member, added that OTs are uniquely suited for political office because of our holistic mindset and expertise as solving problems.

\*We were recording the meeting in hopes of making it available on the MiOTA website for those who could not attend. Unfortunately, the sound quality was poor and we will not be posting this meeting. We hope to fix the issue and try again next time.

2. Reminder about the Barb Rider Colloquium on October 26. See the link:

<https://www.wmich.edu/ridercolloquium/>

3. We are always taking suggestions on topics for future meetings, including required courses for licensure such as pain or human trafficking. Please let us know if you have expertise that you would like to share with our chapter.

4. Reminder to check the MiOTA website for updated information relevant to occupational therapy in Michigan, [www.miota.org](http://www.miota.org) . To become a member, use this link:

<https://mms.miota.org/members/newmem/registration.php?orgcode=MOTA&>

5. Free MiOTA webinars/a benefit membership! Here is the link to the MiOTA webinars:

[https://www.miota.org/webinar\\_list.php](https://www.miota.org/webinar_list.php)

Attendees who are MiOTA members will receive a PDU certificate by email from Holly at the MiOTA office. Please contact me if you do not receive your certificate within the next 1-2 weeks.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine