



Occupational Therapy: A Healthcare Solution for Texans Across the Lifespan Priorities for the 89th Legislative Session

Occupational therapy (OT) services support the developmental, physical, and behavioral health needs of Texans across the lifespan. This legislative session, TOTA advocates for expanding access to OT services in mental and behavioral health, improving the healthcare delivery system, and ensuring access to cost-effective, high-quality care for Texans.

Increasing access to OT services in mental and behavioral health

- TOTA supports expanding access to occupational therapy services, as evidence shows OT practitioners effectively promote independence, participation, and improved social behavior for individuals with mental health and behavioral needs¹, including those in state-supported programs like Texas Medicaid.

Improve access to the healthcare delivery system

- TOTA supports HB 932 by Rep. Walle, the Occupational Therapy Licensure Compact Act, which provides a fiscally responsible, state-based solution to address workforce shortages by enhancing licensure portability, preserving state sovereignty, and expanding consumer access to highly qualified occupational therapy practitioners.
- TOTA supports expanding the use of telemedicine to reduce costs and increase access to medically necessary care for Texans in rural and other underserved areas and to those for whom travel to receive services was already a barrier to access, including people with disabilities.

Support access to cost-effective, high-quality Medicaid and CHIP programs

Occupational therapy practitioners work with people who rely on Medicaid for health care across multiple settings, including schools, community mental health centers, skilled nursing facilities, and clients' homes.

- **Support Increased Medicaid Reimbursement for Occupational Therapy:** Over 4 million Texans depend on Medicaid, yet reimbursement rates for occupational therapy services have remained stagnant for over 15 years. Increasing rates annually, at minimum to match inflation, is essential to ensure equitable access to care.
- **Promote Independence and Success Through Occupational Therapy:** Medicaid-funded occupational therapy services are critical for helping children with developmental delays thrive into self-sufficient adults (Pierce, 2019), enabling adults with disabilities to live independently, and supporting individuals with mental illness in achieving recovery and healthy life.
- **Schools & early intervention:** Support legislation and funding for Early Childhood Intervention to ensure children have access to occupational therapy services, promoting improved outcomes and a strong investment in our future.

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¹*Systematic review of occupational therapy and mental health promotion, prevention, and intervention for children and youth* (Am. J. Occup. Ther., Arbesman, 2013).