



# State Affairs

## UPDATE

Fall 2019

### **AOTA Begins Licensure Compact Initiative**

AOTA has signed a multi-year contract with the Council of State Governments (CSG) National Center for Interstate Compacts to create an interstate professional licensure compact for occupational therapy. This initiative is in response to licensure portability questions. The Occupational Therapy Licensure Compact legislation must be passed into law in each state where it will apply. The goal is to begin state participation by 2024.

An interstate licensing compact would:

- Allow licensed occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants to practice across state lines (e.g., telehealth)
- Improve consumer access to occupational therapy
- Enhance mobility of occupational therapy practitioners (e.g., spouses of relocating military families, staff of travel therapy companies)
- Improve continuity of care
- Preserve and strengthen the state licensure system
- Enhance the exchange of licensure, investigatory, and disciplinary information between member states.
- An interstate licensing compact would not change state occupational therapy practice acts or the scope of practice.

The CSG will partner with AOTA during each phase of the initiative.

AOTA will provide updates to the [Interstate Professional Licensing Compact](#) page as the initiative progresses. Other health care professions with interstate licensing compacts in varying stages of development include nursing, physicians, physical therapy, and psychology.

### **Upcoming AOTA Events:**

- [National School Backpack Awareness Day: September 18, 2019, Nationwide](#)
- [Hill Day: September 23, 2019, Washington, DC](#)
- [AOTA Education Summit: October 18-19, 2019, Las Vegas, Nevada](#)
- [AOTA/NBCOT Student Conclave: November 1-2, 2019, Marriott O'Hare \(Suburban Chicago\)](#)
- [Member Appreciation Celebration, November 4-8. Registration opens October 18.   
<https://www.aota.org/Conference-Events/member-appreciation/week.aspx>](#)
- [Older Driver Safety Awareness Week: December 2-6, 2019, Nationwide](#)



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### AOTA State Affairs Attends National Conference of State Legislatures 2019 Legislative Summit

AOTA State Affairs once again was a notable presence in the Exhibit Hall in Nashville, Tennessee, at the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) Legislative Summit. Attending the NCSL Legislative Summit provides AOTA with the opportunity to promote the OT profession to state legislators and legislative staff from around the country and even internationally. Additionally, AOTA staff and leaders from the Tennessee Occupational Therapy Association promoted the start of AOTA's Interstate Professional Licensure Compact initiative by discussing the next steps and timeline with attendees as well as through giveaways and handouts. Legislators and legislative staff were very interested in the news that AOTA has begun to work on a compact, especially as legislators are looking for ways to streamline licensure requirements and make transferring a license from one state to another easier.

NCSL is a nonpartisan organization that provides issue research, professional development opportunities, and programming for state legislators and state legislative staff around the country and around the world.



Valery Hanks, OTR/L, CPAM, C/NDT, Tennessee Occupational Therapy Association (TNOTA) Secretary, and David S. McGuire, OTR/L, TNOTA President, working the AOTA booth at the NCSL Legislative Summit in Nashville.



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### **New Tool from AOTA, APTA, and ASHA Helps Evaluate Habilitative and Rehabilitative Insurance Benefits**

Habilitative and rehabilitative services and devices are essential parts of comprehensive health insurance, and occupational therapy, physical therapy, and speech therapy are the foundational services in any habilitation and rehabilitation benefits package. AOTA, the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA), and the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) have created [a checklist of things to consider](#) when evaluating rehabilitation and habilitation benefit designs. Advocates can use this tool to assess the adequacy of benefits and make the case for appropriate coverage of therapy services with insurers, employers, and policymakers.

Habilitative services help a person keep, learn, or improve skills or functioning for daily living. In contrast, rehabilitative services help a person keep, get back, or improve skills and functioning for daily living that have been lost or impaired because of being sick, hurt, or disabled. By promoting these definitions of habilitation and rehabilitation, the [Joint Habilitation/Rehabilitation Benefit Coverage Statement: Guide to Assessing Adequacy of Benefits](#) advances the principle that therapy benefits should include services to attain and maintain, not just regain, skills and functioning.

For more information, contact Laura Hooper, AOTA's Health Policy Manager, at [lhooper@aota.org](mailto:lhooper@aota.org).

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