**Iowa Occupational Therapy Association**

**2023 Policy Agenda**

*IOTA is a membership-based organization that works to build the capacity*

*of its members through education, research, and communication.*

*IOTA acts as a public advocate for occupational therapy to promote the*

*viability of the profession and access to services.*

**Address Occupational Therapy Workforce Shortage**

Iowa Workforce Development has identified a significant shortage of Occupational Therapists across Iowa in their High-Demand-High Growth Occupations list. IWD ranked OTs among the highest for health-related occupations in demand, with the OT annual growth rate at only 2%. Inclusion of OT as one of the recognized professions eligible for the Health Care Loan Repayment Program, as other surrounding states have done, would address a critical workforce shortage and improve access to care, especially in rural areas.

**OT as a Mental Health Professional – SSB 1045**

 **(working on amendment to answer opposition concerns)**

Iowa Code Section 645.206.1(147), defining the OT Scope of Practice, clearly recognizes the role of occupational therapy in the delivery of mental health care. It is defined as addressing the physical, cognitive, psychosocial, sensory-perceptual, and other aspects of performance in a variety of contexts and environments to support engagement in occupations that affect physical and mental health, well-being, and quality of life. IOTA supports proposed legislation recognizing OTs as mental health professionals which will increase access to MH services in shortage areas. OTs are Masters and Doctorate level health care providers trained in the area of mental health.

**Home Modification**

IOTA supports the allocation of $1M in state funding in the Health and Human Services Appropriations bill for home modification grants to administer livable home grants. Home modifications are cost-effective by avoiding Medicaid expenditures and keeping residents out of long-term care.

**Uphold the Integrity of Occupational Therapy Licensing in Iowa**

The purpose of licensure is to protect the patient, ensure qualified healthcare professionals, protect standards of care, and discourage potential fraud and abuse of taxpayer dollars. IOTA supports legislation to update state practice acts.

**Resolve issues with Medicaid Managed Care**

Encourage oversight of Medicaid Managed Care Organizations so individuals can have access to services needed for rehabilitation and habilitation.