



# Occupational Therapy

## *OTs are an under-utilized health care professional in the mental health field.*

According to a recent poll that nearly 75% of Iowans would state that “the lack of mental-health services is a crisis... [or] believe it’s a big problem.”

(Leys, Tony. “Many Iowans See Mental-Health System in Crisis, New Iowa Poll Finds.” *Des Moines Register*, The Des Moines Register, 10 May 2018.)

National Alliance on Mental Illness states that about 600,000 Iowans live with some form of mental illness every day. Occupational Therapists are trained to address physical and environmental needs based on assessment of the whole person, increasing the available access to mental health care.

### **Work Settings**

Hospital-based	Neonatal Intensive Care	Home Health
Community-based	Early Intervention	Academia
School-based	Private Practice	Consultative Work
Mental Health	Skilled Nursing	Regulatory Agencies

## **2019 Legislative Agenda**

### **OT as a Mental Health Provider**

Occupational therapists assist individuals in all stages of recovery by teaching coping strategies, healthy lifestyles, managing within the community, monitoring of physical concerns, and developing a long-term action plan to meet personal recovery goals. Any proposed legislation regarding mental health services should include occupational therapists as a recognized provider.

### **Rural Loan Repayment Program**

There is a shortage of occupational therapists in Iowa, especially in rural areas. Inclusion of OT as one of the recognized professions eligible for the Health Care Loan Repayment Program would address a critical workforce shortage and improve access to care.

### **Telehealth Services Promote Quality OT Practice**

Delivering occupational therapy services through telehealth allows access to care and services wherever the client is located, removing barriers to care and promoting intervention within the client’s context and environment. Telehealth can improve access to services in every practice area.

### **Resolve Issues with Medicaid Managed Care**

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