



Maryland Occupational Therapy Association

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Committee: House Health and Government Operations Committee
Bill Number: House Bill 1208
Title: Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Telehealth – Pilot Program
Hearing Date: March 4, 2020
Position: Support

The Maryland Occupational Therapy Association (MOTA) supports *House Bill 1208 – Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Telehealth – Pilot Program*. This bill would require the Maryland Medicaid Program to apply for federal approval to establish a pilot program to study providing certain health care services via telehealth in alternative settings.

MOTA has long supported efforts in Maryland to expand the delivery of occupational therapy services through telehealth. As occupational therapy services are often provided in a client’s home or workplace, the use of telehealth in settings outside of a health care office has obvious advantages. It accomplishes in a relatively brief interaction what would otherwise require hours of round-trip travel for the occupational therapist. This in turn reduces staff costs and affords access to services for a greater number of individuals.

In addition, through the use of new technologies such as mobile health devices, occupational therapists are now able to monitor health data, including Activities for Daily Living (ADLs) for individuals with chronic health conditions, while a client is in their home, at work, or otherwise in their community. This may inform an occupational therapist of the need to modify services within an individual’s environment. Without the use of telehealth and other technologies, this data would be impossible to collect and an in-person encounter is limited to a “moment in time” when the practitioner is physically present.

Unfortunately, the Maryland Medicaid program does not recognize occupational therapy practitioners as mental health providers. We hope this bill will serve as another opportunity for MOTA to work with the Maryland Department of Health in studying and adopting policies that assist Marylanders with mental health conditions access occupational therapy services in their homes and communities.

Thank you for your consideration of our testimony, and we urge a favorable vote. If we can provide any further information, please contact Rachael Faulkner at rfaulkner@policypartners.net or (410) 693-4000.