



# Maryland Occupational Therapy Association

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PO Box 131 ♦ Stevenson, Maryland 21153 ♦ [mota.memberlodge.org](http://mota.memberlodge.org)

**Committee:** House Health and Government Operations Committee  
**Bill Number:** House Bill 455  
**Title:** Health Insurance – Coverage for Mental Health Benefits and Substance Use Disorder Benefits – Treatment Criteria  
**Hearing Date:** February 20, 2020  
**Position:** Support

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The Maryland Occupational Therapy Association (MOTA) supports *House Bill 455 – Health Insurance – Coverage for Mental Health Benefits and Substance Use Disorder Benefits – Treatment Criteria*. This bill would require insurance carriers to report each year to the Maryland Insurance Administration on their compliance with the federal Mental Health Parity and Addictions Equity Act.

Occupational therapists address barriers that individuals with mental health conditions experience in the community by providing interventions that focus on enhancing existing skills; remediating or restoring skills; modifying or adapting the environment or activity; and preventing relapse. As such, both the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT) and the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) include mental health services within the scope of practice for occupational therapists.<sup>1</sup>

Unfortunately, carriers do not all consistently recognize occupational therapy practitioners as mental health providers and it remains difficult for outpatient mental health programs to employ occupational therapists due to inconsistent reimbursement. We support this bill as it creates a mechanism to regularly collect data on which services are provided, and perhaps more importantly, which services are being denied. This should assist both the MIA and MOTA in ensuring that occupational therapy is a covered benefit for individuals in mental health treatment.

Thank you for your consideration of our testimony, and we urge a favorable vote. If we can provide any further information, please contact Robyn Elliott at [relliott@policypartners.net](mailto:relliott@policypartners.net) or (443) 926-3443.

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<sup>1</sup> National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy – Certificate Renewal.  
<https://www.nbcot.org/Certificants/Certification>

American Occupational Therapy Association – Occupational Therapy’s Role in Community Mental Health.  
<https://www.aota.org/~media/Corporate/Files/AboutOT/Professionals/WhatIsOT/MH/Facts/Community-mental-health.pdf>