



Maryland Occupational Therapy Association

PO Box 131 ♦ Stevenson, Maryland 21153 ♦ motamembers.org

Committee: House Health and Government Operations Committee
Bill Number: House Bill 847
Title: State Coordinator for Autism Strategy and Advisory Stakeholder Group on Autism-Related Needs
Hearing Date: February 26, 2020
Position: Support with Amendment

The Maryland Occupational Therapy Association (MOTA) supports *House Bill 847 – State Coordinator for Autism Strategy and Advisory Stakeholder Group on Autism-Related Needs*, with an amendment. This bill would establish a state coordinator in the Department of Disabilities and an advisory stakeholder group to develop a strategic plan on autism-related services. We are requesting that the Advisory Stakeholder Group include a representative from MOTA instead of an occupational therapist.

Occupational therapy practitioners include both occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants. We provide habilitative services to individuals with autism spectrum disorders across the lifespan. This includes education settings working with students with disabilities who have an Individualized Education Program (IEP), older adults in assisted living and nursing homes, and children and adults of all ages receiving habilitative services in hospitals and outpatient community health settings.

We know first-hand the difficulties many adults with autism, and their families, experience as they leave school and enter adulthood. This includes limits on health care visits for adults and an overall lack of coordination to community supports. While we appreciate the inclusion of an occupational therapist on the Advisory Stakeholder Group, we believe it would be beneficial to have instead, an occupational therapist representative from MOTA that can speak to the variety of practice settings and services occupational therapy practitioners provide.

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.

AMENDMENTS

On page 5, in line 4, strike “**AND**”; and in line 5, insert “**(8) ONE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE MARYLAND OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSOCIATION**”; and on page 5, strike line 8 in its entirety.

On page 5, in lines 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, and 16, strike “**(8)**”, “**(I)**”, “**(II)**”, “**(IV)**”, “**(V)**”, “**(VI)**”, “**(VII)**”, “**(VIII)**”, “**(IX)**”, respectively, and substitute “**(9)**”, “**(I)**”, “**(II)**”, “**(III)**”, “**(IV)**”, “**(V)**”, “**(VI)**”, “**(VII)**”, and “**(VIII)**”, respectively.