



Maryland Occupational Therapy Association

PO Box 131 ♦ Stevenson, Maryland 21153 ♦ mota.memberlodge.org

Committee: House Health and Government Operations Committee

Bill Number: HB 1165

Title: Health Insurance – Provider Panels – Coverage for Nonparticipating Providers

Hearing Date: February 20, 2020

Position: Support

The Maryland Occupational Therapy Association (MOTA) supports *House Bill 1165 – Health Insurance – Provider Panels – Coverage for Nonparticipating Providers*. This bill would require insurance carriers to inform members of their right to request a referral for a specialist who is not a part of the carrier's provider panel and require insurers to cover out-of-network behavioral health providers under certain circumstances.

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.¹

Unfortunately, carriers do not all consistently recognize occupational therapy practitioners as mental health providers. This bill would allow individuals with an opportunity to access occupational therapy services when there are not sufficient in-network occupational therapy practitioners. In addition, it is critical for consumers to be aware of their right to request a referral for appropriate mental health services as individuals may not be aware of what services are available for the treatment of a mental health condition.

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 or (443) 926-3443.

¹ 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>