



Maryland Occupational Therapy Association

PO Box 36401, Towson, Maryland 21286 ♦ motamembers.org

Committee: House Health and Government Operations Committee
Bill Number: House Bill 732
Title: Health Care Practitioners – Telehealth – Out-of-State Health Care Practitioners
Hearing Date: February 10, 2021
Position: Oppose

The Maryland Occupational Therapy Association (MOTA) opposes *House Bill 732 – Health Care Practitioners – Telehealth – Out-of-State Health Care Practitioners*, which would establish reciprocity for health care providers to provide telehealth services to a patient located in Maryland.

MOTA strongly opposes this bill as we believe it conflicts with our legislation (HB 540) this year to join Maryland into the Interstate Occupational Therapy Licensure Compact. This compact was developed by the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA), in partnership with the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT) and Council of State Governments through an 18-month stakeholder process. Once the compact is enacted, occupational therapists (OTs) and occupational therapy assistants (OTAs) will be able to work in states which have entered the compact, including through the use of telehealth. Currently, occupational therapy practitioners are required to obtain licensure in each state they want to practice in.

MOTA has spent the past 9 months working with our national partners and the Maryland Board of Occupational Therapy Practice on this compact to ensure that there are minimum standards and provisions related to education and training; continuing education; criminal background checks; and perhaps most importantly, the coordination of disciplinary matters among states.

We are very concerned with the implementation of our compact if House Bill 732 were to be enacted, including the incentive for out-of-state provider to work under the compact if they can simply register with the licensing board. This would allow out-of-state OTs and OTAs to bypass the patient safety mechanisms build into the compact.

Finally, while our compact legislation allows the Board to enact a fee to out-of-state practitioners who choose to work in Maryland through the compact, HB 732 does not include a

mechanism for boards to offset any additional costs associated with reciprocity. This means that any extra costs associated with this bill will be covered by occupational therapists who live in Maryland and pay licensing fees to practice.

Thank you for your consideration of our concerns with this legislation. We agree that Maryland must address licensure reciprocity as we move forward with telehealth, but would ask that the General Assembly support the adoption of interstate licensure compacts instead. If we can provide any further information, please contact Robyn Elliott at relliott@policypartners.net or (443) 926-3443.