



# Maryland Occupational Therapy Association

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PO Box 36401, Towson, Maryland 21286 ♦ [mota-members.com](http://mota-members.com)

<b>Committee:</b>	<b>House Appropriations Committee</b>
<b>Bill Number:</b>	<b>Senate Bill 165</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Education – Coaches – Mental Health Training</b>
<b>Hearing Date:</b>	<b>March 20, 2024</b>
<b>Position:</b>	<b>Support</b>

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The Maryland Occupational Therapy Association (MOTA) supports Senate Bill 165 – *Education – Coaches – Mental Health Training*. This bill requires each public school in the State that offers an athletic program and each public institution of higher education that offers an athletic program to provide specified mental health training to each participating coach. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) must work in collaboration with the Maryland Department of Health (MDH), each local board of education, and the Maryland Public Secondary Schools Athletic Association (MPSSAA) to develop guidelines for public schools to train coaches in recognizing the indicators of mental illness and behavioral distress in students.

Occupational therapists play a crucial role in supporting the mental well-being of individuals, and this extends to athletes as well. Athletes face immense pressure and stress, both on and off the field, which can significantly impact their mental health. Therefore, it is imperative that athletic coaches receive mental health training to better understand and address the needs of their athletes. By equipping coaches with the necessary knowledge and skills, occupational therapists can help create a supportive and inclusive environment in which athletes feel comfortable seeking help for their mental health concerns. This collaboration between occupational therapists and athletic coaches ensures that athletes receive holistic care, addressing both their physical and mental well-being.

We ask for a favorable report. If we can provide any further information, please contact Michael Paddy at [mpaddy@policypartners.net](mailto:mpaddy@policypartners.net).