



Maryland Occupational Therapy Association

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

Committee: House Health and Government Operations Committee
Bill Number: House Bill 551
Title: Preserve Telehealth Access Act of 2021
Hearing Date: February 10, 2021
Position: Support

The Maryland Occupational Therapy Association (MOTA) supports *House Bill 551 – Maryland Medical Assistance Program and Health Insurance – Coverage and Reimbursement of Telehealth Services*. This bill makes permanent in law several telehealth provisions permitted during the current health care pandemic.

MOTA has long supported efforts in Maryland to expand the delivery of occupational therapy services through telehealth. As health and behavioral health providers, we often provide occupational therapy services in a client’s home and other community-based setting. Doing this through telehealth has obvious advantages. It accomplishes in a relatively brief interaction what would otherwise require hours of round-trip travel for the occupational therapist. This in turn reduces staff costs and affords access to services for a greater number of individuals.

Patient counseling on the use of durable medical equipment is an example of use of telehealth in occupational therapy. Common equipment for seating and positioning, feeding, bathing and toileting lend themselves to synchronous and asynchronous telehealth solutions through measurements and follow-up that can be conducted remotely. Eliminating Medicaid’s originating site requirement that a patient be in a clinical health setting allows occupational therapists the ability to more closely utilize telehealth when providing services to a patient in their home and community.

In addition, being able to do provide services via audio-only means that individuals will have greater access to occupational therapist services. This is especially important as patients of all ages transition back home from a hospital or rehabilitation center and require assistance in home modifications and the use of durable medical equipment.

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.