

May 28, 2020

Senate Finance Committee Hearing Testimony

Re: HB20 -1230

Thank you, madam chair and the members of the committee for giving us an opportunity to submit written testimony.

My name is Pamela DiPasquale-Lehnerz and I am currently the President of the Occupational Therapy Association of Colorado. There are approximately 5000 occupational therapy practitioners in the state of Colorado. Our organization supports and represents both occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants.

We ask for your support of House Bill 20-1230 which continues the consumer protection of health services with licensure for these occupations.

This legislation protects our most vulnerable populations who are compromised either permanently or temporarily in cognition, mental health and mobility functions. These populations are our elderly in skilled nursing facilities, those with mental health disabilities in psychiatric settings, adults with cognitive delays in group homes, children with significant developmental delays in the schools and people with compromised health conditions that put them at risk for long term care societal needs.

Occupational therapy has a more than 100-year history in this country of providing care to individuals who have suffered significant mental and physical health impacts as a result of stroke, mental health disorders, traumatic brain injury, spinal cord injury, birth defects, autism, chronic pain, amputations, and disease processes such as rheumatoid arthritis, multiple sclerosis, Alzheimer's and cancer. As occupational therapy practitioners, we have been involved in the health consequences of both World Wars, the mechanization of farm machinery, automation in our factories, the polio epidemic, traumatic auto accidents and rehabilitation of individuals who have computer overuse injuries.

We continue to evolve our practice to meet the current needs of society which now includes the acute rehabilitation of COVID-19 patients as primary care providers.

We work with our clients or patients to return them to work, increase their self-care independence, ensure successful accommodation to schools, keep them in their homes, promote community reintegration and general wellness.

Colorado occupational therapy consumers need your protection afforded by continuing the OT Practice Act and we thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Pam DiPasquale-Lehnerz MS,OTR/L

President

Occupational Therapy Association of Colorado