DATE: March 23, 2020  
TO: Recreational Therapists, Administrators, Managers  
FROM: Brent Wolfe, PhD, CTRS, FDRT, ATRA Executive Director  
RE: Recreational Therapists as Essential Personnel  
PRIORITY: Urgent

As facilities, agencies, and organizations are working to define “essential personnel,” it is vital for all stakeholders to understand that certified and/or licensed Recreational Therapists are essential personnel. According to the CDC, there are 10 essential public health services:

1. Monitor health status to identify and solve community health problems
2. Diagnose and investigate health problems and health hazards in the community
3. Inform, educate, and empower people about health issues
4. Mobilize community partnerships and action to identify and solve health problems
5. Develop policies and plans that support individual and community health efforts
6. Enforce laws and regulations that protect health and ensure safety
7. Link people to needed personal health services and assure the provision of healthcare when otherwise unavailable
8. Assure competent public and personal health care workforce
9. Evaluate effectiveness, accessibility, and quality of personal and population based health services
10. Research for new insights and innovative solutions to health problems (CDC, 2018)

When reviewing this list of ten essential functions, it becomes quite clear that many of these functions fall within the Standards for the Practice of Recreational Therapy (ATRA, 2015) and the NCTRC Job Analysis (NCTRC, 2014).

Additionally, the Department of Homeland Security has identified 14 Essential Critical Infrastructure Workers (DHS, 2020). At the top of this list are public health/health care workers. Specific examples include:

- **Caregivers** (e.g., physicians, dentists, psychologists, mid-level practitioners, nurses and assistants, infection control and quality assurance personnel, pharmacists, physical and occupational therapists and assistants, social workers, speech pathologists and diagnostic and therapeutic technicians and technologists)
- **Hospital and laboratory personnel** (including accounting, administrative, admitting and discharge, engineering, epidemiological, source plasma and blood donation, food service, housekeeping, medical records, information technology and operational technology, nutritionists, sanitaritians, respiratory therapists, etc.)
- **Workers in other medical facilities** (including Ambulatory Health and Surgical, Blood Banks, Clinics, Community Mental Health, Comprehensive Outpatient rehabilitation, End Stage Renal Disease, Health Departments, Home Health care, Hospices, Hospitals, Long Term Care, Organ Pharmacies, Procurement Organizations, Psychiatric Residential, Rural Health Clinics and Federally Qualified Health Centers)

While Recreational Therapists are not overtly included in this list, the functions of job tasks of recreational therapists are clearly included.