

NYSOTA Talking Points

New York State Occupational Therapy Association

Direct Access to Occupational Therapy

A.8889 by Assembly Member McDonald

I want to ask for the Assembly Member's support of Assembly bill McDonald.

The legislation allows patients up to twelve visits with an occupational therapist without a referral from a physician, nurse practitioner or other health care provider;

It would also require the occupational therapist to inform the patient that the insurance plan may choose not to cover the services if it is not ordered by a doctor or nurse practitioner.

The licensed occupational therapist has to have practiced occupational therapy on a full-time basis equivalent of not less than three years.

Direct access to occupational therapy allows the public to initiate rehabilitation in a timely manner which may address immediate safety issues such as falls or injury in the home or community.

Direct access also avoids the cost of unnecessary medical appointments.

There is no evidence of a public safety concern regarding people having direct access to occupational therapy services. The public has had direct access to occupational therapy in over 32 states for many years without an incident. In addition, the public has had direct access to physical therapy services in New York for over twenty years without an incident.

We urge the Assembly Higher Education Committee to report this bill out of committee.