

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
March 19, 2009

**CONTACT:** Heather R. Huhman  
(301) 652-6611 x 2963  
[praota@aota.org](mailto:praota@aota.org)

## **“HELMETS CAN SAVE LIVES,” SAYS OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION**

**Bethesda, MD** — In response to actress Natasha Richardson’s recent skiing accident, the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) released the following statement:

*First and foremost, our thoughts go out to Ms. Richardson’s friends and family.*

*Whether you’re riding a bike, driving a motorcycle, skiing or participating in other active sports, it is important to wear recommended safety equipment at all times. Helmets can protect against head injuries and potentially save lives. Unfortunately, head and brain injuries are all-too-common. Further, injuries that may appear minor can result in lasting physical, cognitive, behavioral or emotional difficulties—or even have more devastating consequences. Visit your physician or local emergency room for immediate assistance if you’ve sustained any type of head injury.*

*People with a brain injury may experience short-term memory loss; have difficulty concentrating or paying attention; become easily disoriented; have impaired judgment; experience headaches or migraines; have slurred speech; experience seizures; become fatigued, depressed, or easily agitated; or experience increased anxiety and impulsive behaviors. News reports suggest Ms. Richardson went to the hospital after experiencing a headache about an hour after the incident.*

*Occupational therapy can help people address the long-term consequences of a brain injury. The type and duration of therapy intervention depend on the severity of the injury—ranging from helping the individual perform simple tasks that are meaningful to their life to teaching the individual to compensate for problems with thinking, such as memory impairments.*

Note: March is National Brain Injury Awareness Month. For more information or to interview an occupational therapy practitioner who specializes in brain injury, please contact Heather Huhman at [praota@aota.org](mailto:praota@aota.org) or (301) 652-6611 x 2963.

Founded in 1917, the **American Occupational Therapy Association** (AOTA) represents the interests and concerns of more than 140,000 occupational therapists, assistants and students nationwide. The Association educates the public and advances the profession of occupational therapy by providing resources, setting standards including accreditations and serving as an advocate to improve health care. Based in Bethesda, Md., AOTA’s major programs and activities are directed toward promoting the professional development of its members and assuring consumer access to quality services so patients can maximize their individual potential. For more information, go to [www.aota.org](http://www.aota.org).