

**I OT in Mental Health Act: HR 1037 and S 1815
and Excellence in Mental Health Demonstration Project
Talking Points – Not to be left behind**

- Occupational Therapy is an important part of quality mental health care in this country.
- OT fills a niche in the treatment of serious and pervasive mental illness, and the promotion of mental wellness, not covered by other professions.
- **Give examples and discuss what OT can do to help people with mental illness and behavioral health issues - choose from a setting you are comfortable with, pediatrics, geriatrics, serious mental illness. When in doubt focus on functional routines.**
- Medicare recently recognized the importance of occupational therapy to quality community mental health care when they included the provision of occupational therapy in their “conditions of participation” for community mental health centers.
- We would like Congressional support for the inclusion of occupational therapy in upcoming regulations for the Excellence in Mental Health demonstration project and will be circulating a letter.
- **Additionally we are seeking cosponsors of the Occupational Therapy in Mental Health Act**
- HR 1037/S 815 amends the National Health Service Corp Loan Forgiveness Program to include Occupational Therapists under the definition of “behavioral and mental health professional”.
- This bill will help expand the number of OTs practicing in mental health in two ways:
 - By encouraging more new therapists to enter the field and to practice in shortage areas through loan forgiveness; and
 - By providing a guideline for states and other federal programs to include occupational therapy when defining qualified mental health professionals. The National Health Services Corps (NHSC) appears to be the only place in federal law where the term “behavioral and mental health professionals” are specifically defined.
- We have a letter of support from the Mental Health Liaison Group supporting our inclusion.
- This bill has zero cost.
- **Can you contact the office when we have a support letter for inclusion of OT in the Excellence in Mental Health Demonstration Project?**
- **Will you cosponsor the Occupational Therapy in Mental Health Act?**