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MEDIA CONTACTS

AOTA: Katie Riley, 301-652-6611, x2963 or kriley@aota.org

NBCOT: Angela Macauley, am@nbcot.org

AOTA and NBCOT Announce Collaboration to Support Development of an Interstate Licensure Compact for Occupational Therapy

Multi-year initiative would improve consumer access to occupational therapy services, enhance the mobility of occupational therapy practitioners, and strengthen the state licensure system.

Bethesda, MD—The American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA®) and the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT®) will be collaborating over the next four years to create an interstate licensure compact for the occupational therapy profession. AOTA and NBCOT will be working with the Council of State Governments (CSG), state occupational therapy regulatory entities, state occupational therapy associations, and other stakeholders to allow state licensure reciprocity. A compact is a legal agreement between states that will allow licensed occupational therapists (OTs) and occupational therapy assistants (OTAs) to practice in those states that join the compact. Currently, OTs and OTAs must obtain licensure in each state in which they want to practice. An interstate licensure compact for the occupational therapy profession will:

- Improve consumer access to occupational therapy
- Increase opportunities to practice across state lines (e.g., telehealth, telerehabilitation, distance education)
- Enhance mobility of occupational therapy practitioners and their families
- Support spouses of relocating military families
- Improve continuity of care
- Preserve and strengthen the state licensure system
- Enhance the exchange of licensure verification, investigatory, and disciplinary information between member states.

CSG's nationally recognized National Center for Interstate Compacts will lead stakeholders through a consensus-based process to develop the licensure compact language. The draft language will then be circulated for input from the profession.

The occupational therapy licensure compact legislation must be passed in each state where it will apply. The goal is to begin state participation by 2024.

AOTA and NBCOT are committed to working together throughout the process of creating and implementing the licensure compact. Major funding from NBCOT will support the licensure compact initiative; AOTA and state associations will lead advocacy efforts to enact compact legislation in the states.