

POLICY E.14

Subject: **Safe Patient Handling and Mobility**

Code: **RA Motion 11/21**

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to state the Association's position on safe patient handling and mobility (SPHM), and to acknowledge that AOTA recognizes and supports the widespread adoption of evidence-based SPHM approaches within health care organizations and schools. The rationale for this policy includes the following:

1. Health care workers, including occupational therapy practitioners, are at high risk of being injured on the job while providing care.
2. Clients are affected by complications associated with immobility and adverse effects of bed rest and their impact on occupation.
3. Health care organizations and schools are challenged to provide quality, cost-effective care with improved client outcomes and reduction of practitioner injuries.

IT SHALL BE THE POLICY OF THE ASSOCIATION THAT:

1. Occupational therapy practitioners work with clients across the lifespan in a variety of practice settings that include facilitation of positioning and functional mobility as a part of advancing occupational engagement while promoting practitioner, client, and caregiver comfort and safety.
2. Safe patient handling and mobility are policies and programs to reduce or eliminate manual lifting and moving of clients, using ergonomic safety procedures as well as mechanical lifts and other SPHM technologies and tools as recommended by the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) guidelines.
3. Occupational therapy practitioners trained in the use of SPHM are key members in the interprofessional service delivery team and are responsible for performing the evaluation, developing the prognosis and plan of care, implementing the intervention, and determining outcomes and follow-up related to positioning and functional mobility for occupational engagement.
4. Occupational therapy practitioners recommend and provide education and training in SPHM techniques, ergonomic safety practices and procedures, and equipment use which are critical for preventing injury to practitioners, while promoting the safety and comfort of caregivers and clients.

Policy E.14 (cont'd)

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5. Occupational therapy practitioners support appropriate access to and funding for the provision of safe patient handling and mobility equipment suited to the client's needs.
6. Occupational therapy practitioners advocate for the acquisition and investment in SPHM equipment and the development of policies across practice settings (e.g., health care facilities, schools, assisted living) to maximize protection of client and employee safety.
7. Occupational therapy practitioners advocate for the use of evidence-based SPHM practices and the participation of practitioners in research and quality improvement projects to advance current and best practices.

Effective: 11/2021

Revised:

Reviewed:

Rescinded: