

## Support Access to OT for Mental Health Services under Medicare

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**Note:** Begin by sharing why occupational therapy is a valuable service for individuals with mental health or substance use disorders. If you have experience working with clients in behavioral health settings, consider sharing one personal or clinical example.

### Key Point

- **Occupational therapy supports individuals with mental health and substance use disorders by helping them manage daily routines, improve cognitive functioning, and maintain independence.** These are essential skills for avoiding crises and staying engaged in community life.
- Despite the field beginning in mental health, OT is now underrepresented in mental health settings—mostly due to outdated reimbursement structures and a lack of awareness.
- **Medicare Part B already covers OT services for someone with a psychiatric diagnosis,** including in Partial Hospitalization Programs (PHPs) and Intensive Outpatient Programs (IOPs).
- **Confusion around billing practices contributes to underutilization.** OT practitioners bill for their services using standard OT billing codes—not mental health-specific ones—which can lead to misunderstandings about when OT services are covered.
- Raising awareness about OT's role **can help address provider shortages.** When people understand what services OT can provide, it can ease mental health providers shortages and make sure people have access to the services they need.

### The Bill: H.R. 4037, the *Occupational Therapy Mental Health Parity Act*

- H.R. 4037 **directs the Secretary of Health and Human Services to conduct outreach and provide education** to clarify that OT services are covered for individuals with mental health and substance use disorders under Medicare.
- It **does not create a new benefit or expand scope of practice.** It simply ensures that existing coverage is better understood and utilized.
- The bill is modeled on a successful 2001 Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) clarification for dementia care, which significantly improved access to OT services.
- Last year, this bill passed as part of a larger bill in the Senate Finance Committee. As part of that process, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) scored this bill as “**no cost**” because it does not add a new benefit.

### Your Ask:

Please co-sponsor the *Occupational Therapy Mental Health Parity Act* (H.R. 4037)