



# What's the deal with professional associations?

Cindy DeRuiter Blackwell, OTD, OTR/L  
Susan McDonald, EdD, OTR/K  
adapted from Rachel Ashcraft, MS, OTR/L, TBRI® Practitioner

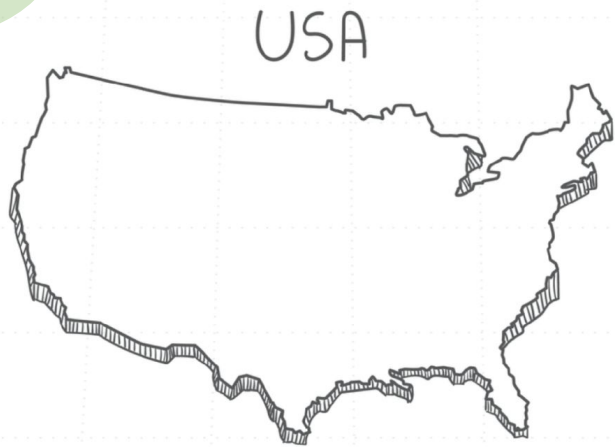
# Objectives

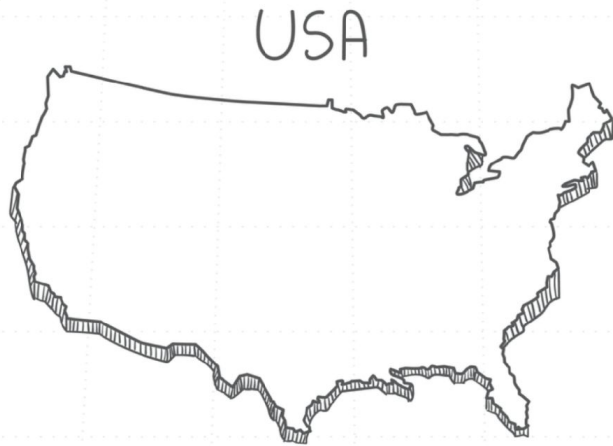
1. Learners will understand the different levels of government regulation that affect OT practice.
2. Learners will be able to articulate the different roles of TNOTA and AOTA, and how they intersect.
3. Learners will analyze the impact of state and federal policy on case studies relevant to OT practice.
4. Learners will be able to articulate regulatory issues impacting OT practice currently, at the state and federal level.



# Alphabet Soup!

- TNOTA
- TNBOT
- TNOTF
- AOTA
- NBCOT
- AOTF
- ACOTE
- SOTA
- COTAD
- AOTA PAC
- WFOT





## National Level – Federal Government

Federal Branches of Government (Executive, Legislative, Judicial)

This level of Government implements Federal Law, Policy, and Programs

A few examples of Federal Law, Policies, Programs that impact OTPs:

- HIPAA
- Social Security
- Medicare
- Affordable Care Act (Habilitation and Rehabilitation clauses)
- Federal Public School Policies (IDEA)

## National Level – Occupational Therapy Organizations

-impacts NATIONAL trends, policies, programs, laws

- American Occupational Therapy Association
- Lobbying for AOTA PAC
- AOTF is a foundation to support Occupational therapy research which guides and supports evidence for practice
- Example: Including OT in federal mental health legislation

## National Level – Occupational therapy Accreditation and Registration/Certification

- ACOTE – accreditation body for OT and OTA programs
- NBCOT – “R” registration as an OT and “C” as an OTA



## State Level –

State Branches of Government (Executive, Legislative, Judicial)

This level of Government implements Law, Policy, and Programs at the state level

A few examples of State Law, Policies, Programs that impact OTPs:

- Medicaid (primarily state level lobbying but Medicaid is jointly funded federally and State so there is overlap)
- Practice Act including Rules & Regulations, scope of practice at the state level
- State Licensure

## State Level – Occupational Therapy Organizations

- **Tennessee Occupational Therapy Association**
- TNOTA support impacts the OT trends in the state of TN, policies, programs, and laws
- Example: Recent legislation to codify telehealth as a practice location, recognized Dry Needling as part of our scope, include OT as non-pharm intervention for pain management [in the state of TN specifically]

## State Level – Occupational Therapy Licensure

- **Tennessee Board of OT** – maintains licensure for the state of Tennessee – this is how we are licensed and legally able to practice in the state of Tennessee as an OT or OTA



# Who are the representatives from Tennessee?

## **FEDERAL** Legislative Branch

- Includes the House and Senate (together known as Congress)

Tennessee Representatives for the UNITED STATES CONGRESS currently in Fall of 2022 are:

General election date

November 8, 2022

House



Senate



# Who are the representatives within Tennessee?

## STATE Legislative Branch

- Includes the House and Senate (together known as Tennessee General Assembly)

There is a House of Representatives (the lower house) and The Senate (the upper house)

**TENNESSEE House of Representatives members and TENNESSEE State Senators**

### House

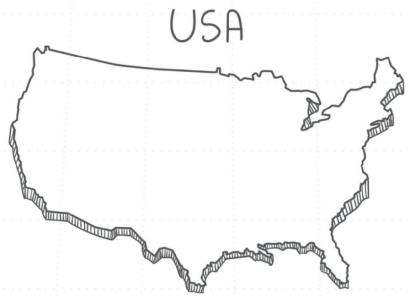
99 Members

### Senate

33 Members







Congressional Affairs

AOTPAC

Federal Regulatory Affairs

Health Care Reform  
Implementation

State Policy



- TNOTA (all volunteers, no paid employees)
- Courtney Atnip (TNOTA lobbyist)

A word of caution:

If you call United States Senator to ask that he support our updated STATE practice act....

They are going to hang up on you.

WHY?

If TNOTA needs you to call your representative, we will email you a link with what to say and WHO that representative is. Same for AOTA, you can follow them online and on social media and when they need you to contact your representative, they will let you know who that is and what to say.

[AOTA Legislative Action Center](#)



# Links to find my representatives- State and Federal

## **State of Tennessee:**

<https://capitol.tn.gov>

This website lists all members of the Tennessee General Assembly  
This includes the Senate and the House of Representatives

## **U.S. Representatives**

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/members/TN>

This lists state of Tennessee's Senators and Representatives in Washington D.C.





## At the School Level

Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE®)

## Student Level Organizations

Student Occupational Therapy Association (SOTA)

Coalition for Occupational Therapy Advocates of Diversity (COTAD) Student Chapters



So What? Why does  
it matter?

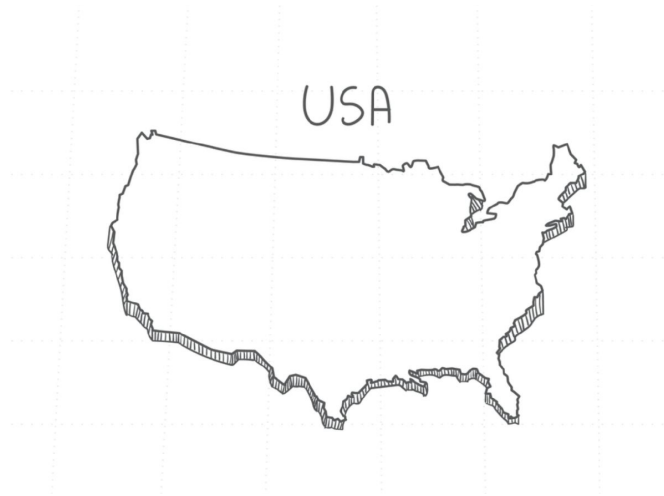
# Example: OT in Mental Health



Mental Health is the root of our profession, yet recognition of OTPs as mental health care providers is limited.



# Example: OT in Mental Health



Different avenues to national advocacy:

- Including OTPs in [lists of mental health](#) providers in legislation
- Legislation mandating payment parity for MH OT services
- Working with SAMSHA & other federal orgs
- Working with state orgs to remove state-level barriers

## Occupational Therapy Mental Health Parity Act introduced in Senate

Heather Parsons 08/18/2022



MENU

ADVOCACY NEWS

Coding & Billing

Medicare

School System

Home > Advocacy > Advocacy News

### Bill Recognizing Occupational Therapy Practitioners as Mental Health Professionals Reintroduced in Congress

# Example: OT in Mental Health



Different avenues to statewide advocacy:

- OTs included in [suicide prevention legislation](#)
- OTs included in non-pharmacological interventions for pain management (“pain bill”)
- Explored allowing OTPs to be eligible for QMHP status
  - not pursuing this route
- Advocate for Medicaid/Tenncare funding for OT services in mental health
- practitioners & students sharing their own stories with state legislators

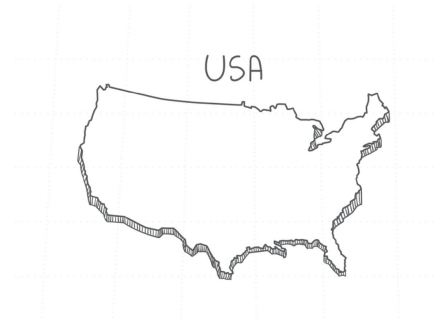
# Example: OT in Mental Health

How can OT/OTA programs fit in?

- expanding MH-focused course curricula
- increase available options for MH fieldwork placements
- promote mental health concepts across courses

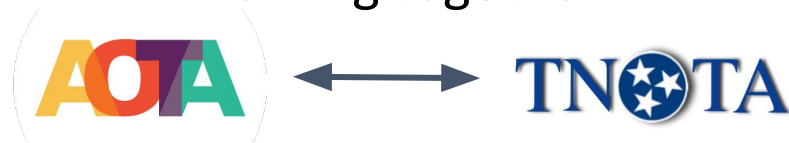


# Example: OT in Mental Health



While AOTA and state associations are advocating at the state level for the expansion of the role of OT in mental health, AOTA's Federal and Regulatory Affairs staff work to ensure recognition of OT in federal behavioral health programs and opportunities. At the state level, several issues have been identified as general barriers to occupational therapy practitioners working in the mental health space. These include limited reimbursement and a lack of opportunities to practice in mental health settings. In addition, there is continued pushback from other professionals who do not believe occupational therapy practitioners have adequate education on mental health or the ability to work with individuals with psychiatric diagnoses.

Working together



# More Statutory, Rule, & Policy Examples

- AOTA's Model Practice Act
- OT licensure compact- TN passed legislation, efforts coordinated across multiple states by AOTA/NBCOT
- OT included in list of non-pharm interventions for chronic pain→ TN leg, supported by AOTA in multiple states
- Telehealth as a service delivery model for OT→ TN leg, being pursued nationally/federally

Many state policy changes are driven by nation-wide trends



# More Statutory, Rule, & Policy Examples

- OTs included in TN suicide prevention bill → TN leg
- Adding Dry Needling to OT's scope → TN leg
- Licensure renewal date change → rule change, done by board of OT
- Removal of iontophoresis from PAMs requirement → rule change, done by board of OT

Many state policy changes are driven by nation-wide trends



# Federal vs. State

Licensure laws & rules (“practice act”) are state by state.

Federal laws & National trends have a great deal of influence OT practice in TN

BUT

The State of TN dictates what we can/can't do under our scope





# How Can we Build a Relationship with our Representatives?

Susan's personal examples from the classroom

What are some of your examples?

What can we do to establish those relationships?

What are outcomes of this relationship building?

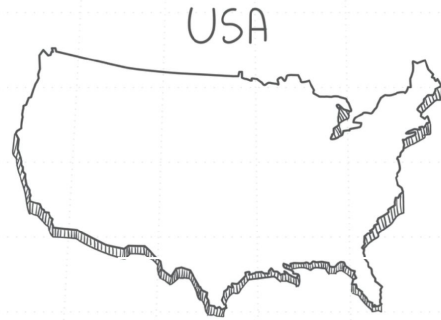
# Why it is important to build relationships It's all about RELATIONSHIPS! And we need your help!

For example:

Senator Bo Watson



While we might think these relationships look like this...



AOTA  
ACOTE  
NBCOT  
AOTA PAC



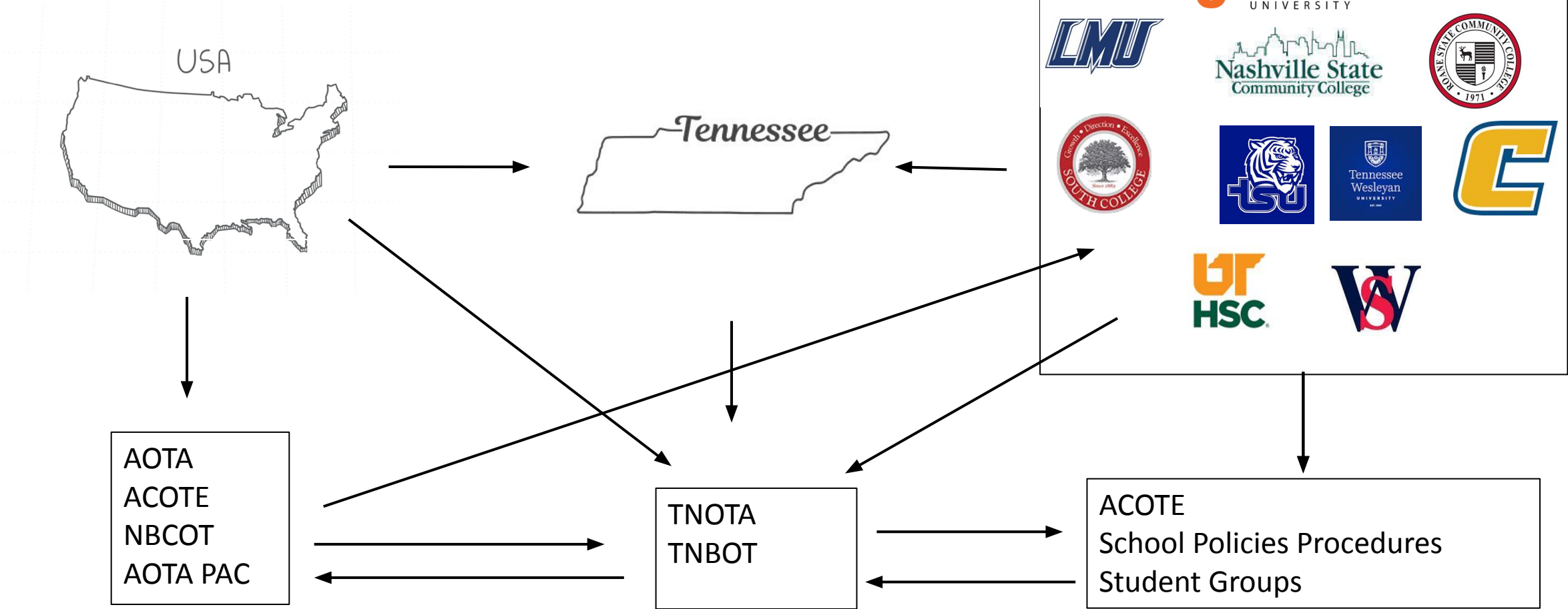
TNOTA  
TNBOT



ACOTE  
School Policies Procedures  
Student Groups



In reality, everything is interrelated. We all support each other, and each level is crucial.






# All Hands On Deck



- National policies and trends impact and trickle down to state level
- Compact for Licensure (AOTA and State associations working closely together)
- AOTA resources often support TNOTA and all the state associations, especially through the AOTA State Support





Professional  
Associations are a  
crucial reason we all  
have jobs, our clients  
are served, and the  
profession continues  
to thrive

AOTA and TNOTA (or  
the state association of  
any state you move to)  
are equally important.  
We have different roles  
but the same goals

# Top 10 Reasons to Join AOTA/TNOTA

1. Broaden your knowledge (CEUs)
2. Take charge of your career (career resources, job board, etc.)
3. Build a better resume (resources on how to write a better resume, and listing professional memberships - shows dedication to your profession)
4. Enhance your network
5. Be a leader (important for personal and professional growth)
6. Get mentorship/Become a mentor
7. Make a new friend (meet other OTPs)
8. Give back to the community (lots of opportunities for service & advocacy)
9. Strength in numbers (support group & for policy changes)
10. Stay inspired & stay motivated. Learn to love what you do!



# DISCUSSION:

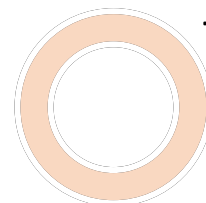

What are some changes you'd like to see?

What can be done on federal, state, local level?





# Take a pledge

- 
- We lose a lot of members in the first year of practice
  - Lots of reasons for this:
    - It's overwhelming when you graduate, and you are studying for boards and starting work
    - Finances can be tight for new graduates
    - Once you are in a job, you may find practitioners who are not engaged in the profession outside of the workplace – you can be an agent of change for the workplace instead of someone who is changed by the workplace
    - Time surprises you
- 



Take a pledge

BUT – TNOTA needs strong membership numbers and member engagement to keep our power!

YOU are important and we want you to stay engaged.



**Take a pledge**

## **Take the First Year Pledge:**

**Pledge to renew your membership (discounted for 1<sup>st</sup> year) within 1 year of graduation AND come to a conference within 2 years of graduation**

**OT membership: \$80**

**OTA membership: \$60**

**1st year OT: \$60**

**1st year OTA: \$40**





## Resources

<https://www.aota.org/publications/ot-practice/ot-practice-issues/2022/capital-report-ot-mental-health>

<https://www.aota.org/publications/ot-practice/ot-practice-issues/2022/capital-report-mental-health-advocacy>

<https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/senate-bill/4712/text>

<https://law.justia.com/codes/tennessee/2021/title-63/chapter-1/part-1/section-63-1-125/>

