



Testimony of
The Connecticut Occupational Therapy Association (ConnOTA)
By
Morgan Villano, Board Member for Government Affairs
Regarding
Telemedicine Bills: Senate Bill 467; Senate Bill 246; House Bill 6487
Before the
Public Health Committee
February 23, 2015

A response to: proposed bill 467 “An Act Concerning the Facilitation of Telemedicine”; proposed bill 246 “An Act Defining and Establishing Standards for the Practice of Telemedicine”; and proposed bill 6487 “An Act Concerning Standards for Telemedicine”.

On behalf of the Connecticut Occupational Therapy Association, we would like to impress upon members of the Public Health Committee the role and impact of telemedicine for those patients who receive occupational therapy services as well as the role telemedicine has in the provision of occupational therapy services. **The Connecticut Occupational Therapy Association proposes their support of telemedicine in Connecticut and respectfully requests to be included in the language of proposed bills 467, 246 and 6487 should these bills move forward.**

Telemedicine is an opportunity to provide medically necessary services in the event that a patient and a provider are physically in different locations, with informed patient consent. The World Federation of Occupational Therapy supports telemedicine when an in person evaluation, intervention and/or supervision of medically necessary occupational therapy services are not available to a patient or geographical and/or environmental

The Connecticut Occupational Therapy Association

1

370 Prospect Street, Wethersfield, CT 06109

Phone: (860) 257-1371

Email: info@connota.org

www.connota.org



challenges to receiving in person occupational therapy services are significantly taxing to the patient and would ultimately impact the timeliness of service provisions affecting the health of the patient. The definition of occupational therapy includes providing client centered interventions that promote health and well being through the medical assessment of and treatment specific to an individual's perceived values, or their occupations. Furthermore, the 2011 World Report on Disabilities, developed by the World Bank and the World Health Organization, supported the use of telemedicine for occupational therapy service provision (International Journal of Telerehabilitation, Vol. 6, Num 1, Spring 2014, 10.5195/ijt.2014.6153).

In 2014 The International Journal of Telerehabilitation published an analysis of states that have telemedicine provisions and regulations; the report strongly suggested that implementation of the Affordable Care Act would result in a significant need for occupational therapy services across the age continuum and the use of telemedicine would support or act as an adjunct in the timely implementation of occupational therapy services, specifically as it relates to patient centered care and multi-disciplinary team based approaches (The International Journal of Telerehabilitation, Vol. 6, No. 1 Spring 2014 • (10.5195/ijt.2014.6141). This impact is felt now in Connecticut, most often in the provision of home health services, where occupational therapists, physical therapists and nurses work to ensure patients manage their daily health safely given the nature of home health does not always indicate daily treatment. The home health multi-disciplinary team works with the patient, often using a telehealth monitoring tool that the patient accesses in the home providing the home health team pertinent medical information regarding vital signs and answers to how a patient is feeling on a daily basis. Clinicians are receiving information specifically regarding daily compliance with medical protocols and procedures such as weight monitoring for the patient with a diagnosis of congestive heart failure, blood sugar readings for a person with a diagnosis of diabetes or feedback on the impact of depression symptoms on a person's daily functioning and engagement in their daily routine. The nature of home health is intermittent weekly treatment based on the acuity of a patient's diagnoses and the use of telehealth monitoring allows the home health professional, such as the occupational therapist, the ability to access critical

The Connecticut Occupational Therapy Association

2

370 Prospect Street, Wethersfield, CT 06109

Phone: (860) 257-1371

Email: info@connota.org

www.connota.org



medical values that directly correlate to the degree and type of in-home medical treatment a patient needs to remain in the community successfully and healthily.

Given that the State of Connecticut is considering defining the practice standards for and definition of telemedicine as it relates to Connecticut constituents, the determination of who would be a telemedicine licensed provider, clarification of the standard of care and decision regarding insurance coverage, **the Connecticut Occupational Therapy Association proposes their support of telemedicine in Connecticut and respectfully requests to be included in the language of proposed bills 467, 246 and 6487 should these bills move forward.** Thank you for the opportunity to comment and ConnOTA looks forward to working with the Committee on these measures.

The Connecticut Occupational Therapy Association

3

370 Prospect Street, Wethersfield, CT 06109

Phone: (860) 257-1371

Email: info@connota.org

www.connota.org