



# OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSOCIATION *of the* PHILIPPINES, Inc.

## POSITION STATEMENT

on

### Proposed House Bill No. 00349

(An Act Establishing City and Municipal Rehabilitation Centers for Children and Youth with Disabilities)

and

### Proposed House Bill No. 00457

(An Act Establishing Rehabilitation Centers for Children and Youth with Disabilities Nationwide)

Occupational Therapy Association of the Philippines, Inc. - November 04, 2014

## Occupational Therapy

### Introductory Statement of the purpose of this paper

*Occupational therapy* is a client-centered health profession concerned with promoting health and well-being through occupation. The primary goal of occupational therapy is to enable people to participate in the activities of everyday life (Occupational Therapy Association of the Philippines, Inc. [OTAP], 2014).

Occupational therapists achieve this outcome by working with people and communities to enhance their ability to engage in the occupations they want to, need to, or are expected to do, or by modifying the occupation or the environment to better support their occupational engagement. (World Federation of Occupational Therapists [WFOT] 2012). The Occupational Therapy Association of the Philippines, Inc (OTAP). is the national professional organization of occupational therapists and is recognized at the national and international levels. It is an advocate for the profession, its practitioners, clients and other stakeholders in the areas of health, wellness, productivity and quality of life. It has been a full member of the World Federation of Occupational Therapists since 1968.



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A full member of the World Federation of Occupational Therapists

#### OTAP Secretariat

9055 Banuyo Street, San Antonio Village, Makati City 1203

Telephone: (02) 895-5523

Mobile: 0917-570-0530 (Membership)

0917-519-1748 (Public Relations)

[www.otap.org.ph](http://www.otap.org.ph)

The OTAP continually advocates and clarifies understanding of occupational therapy to the general public and the profession's stakeholders, and consequently, promote appropriate and quality healthcare through engagement in occupations.

## Statement of the position being taken

The OTAP recognizes and supports the noble and worthy cause espoused by proposed House Bills 00349 and 00457. It is an important step towards making health and social services accessible to Filipinos with disabilities, thus facilitating their full integration into society.

The OTAP strongly asserts that the provision on “Center Workers and Volunteers” (Sec. 6.a of HB 00349 and HB 00457) needs to be revised to reflect that occupational therapy is an ***autonomous health care profession***. Occupational therapy (OT) services ***are determined (designed) ONLY by qualified (i.e. licensed) occupational therapists*** (many of whom are graduates of an educational program approved by the World Federation of Occupational Therapists) ***in accordance with governing and existing laws and policies (e.g. R.A. 5680 [The Physical Therapy-Occupational Therapy Law]; CHED CMO 24; WFOT, 2011, OTAP By-Laws, 2008).***

Occupational therapists have a **comprehensive and in-depth education** in the medical, social behavioral, psychological, psychosocial and occupational sciences, equipping them with the attitudes, skills and knowledge to work collaboratively with people, individually or in groups or communities (WFOT, 2011). The welfare of persons with disabilities (PWDs) is best served if local rehabilitation centers have licensed occupational therapists as part of the rehabilitation team. These licensed occupational therapists may be employed by the local government unit or volunteer-consultants from nearby therapy facilities may be invited.

The OTAP is committed to collaborating with government and other health organizations on issues and initiatives pertaining to the national health care program (OTAP By-Laws, 2008). It further recognizes that the full integration of persons with disabilities into society is best achieved through the collaborative work of various health and social disciplines like medicine, psychology, social work, physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech and language pathology, nursing, dietetics, and special education among others.



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## Statement of the significance of the position to Philippine Society and Occupational Therapy

Every Filipino, regardless of level of ability, has the right to quality and accessible health care and social welfare services. Ensuring that occupational therapy services are provided only by qualified, licensed occupational therapists working collaboratively with other health and social care professionals safeguards the public's health and welfare. Further, explicitly defining and clarifying the unique nature, role and contribution of occupational therapy to any health care and social welfare team as reflected in public legislation, facilitates and strengthens the profession's development. This, in turn, redounds to the benefit of persons the profession serves, particularly persons with disabilities.

### Conclusion

*House Bills 00349 and 00457 are laudable in their thrust of ensuring quality and accessible health and social care for persons with disabilities. The OTAP and in its members are committed to supporting legislative initiatives that champion the welfare of PWDs. However, such legislations and policies need reflect the unique nature of occupational therapy and its contribution to any health and social care team. The welfare and interests of society, particularly of PWDs, are best served and safeguarded when licensed occupational therapists design and implement occupational therapy programs in various contexts and settings. It is strongly recommended that the Occupational Therapy Association of the Philippines and/or the members of the Professional Regulatory Board for Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy of the Professional Regulation Commission be consulted on matters pertaining to the profession of occupational therapy and the persons that the profession serves.*

### REFERENCES

- Occupational Therapy Association of the Philippines, Inc. (OTAP) Amended By Laws (2008).  
CHED Memorandum Order No. 24, Series of 2006, Policies, Standards, and Guidelines for Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy Education  
Republic Act 5680, An Act Creating the Board for Physical Therapists and Occupational Therapists  
OTAP. (2014). MATRIX: Occupational Therapy Law  
WFOT. (2007). Position Statement on Occupational Therapy – Profession Autonomy. Retrieved October 29, 2014 from <http://www.wfot.org/ResourceCentre.aspx>  
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