

## POSITION STATEMENT ON INSTITUTION AND GOVERNANCE OF CHAPTERS

### Introductory Statement of the purpose of this paper

The Philippine Academy of Occupational Therapists, Inc. (PAOT, Inc.), is an organization that aims to improve and advance occupational therapy as a profession in the Philippines which is also in line with the goal of the World Federation of Occupational Therapy<sup>4</sup>. One of its commitments is to foster strong fellowship and unity among its members towards a common goal through communication.<sup>1</sup> Communication and correspondence between the organization and its members in regions outside Metro Manila has been achieved for years through various methods. These systems might not be able to sustain the continuous development in our profession throughout the country.<sup>2</sup>

The institution of chapters throughout the country would assist the national and professional organization in upholding, enforcing, and monitoring practice standards and ethics in the regions and/or provinces. It would also assist in planning, implementing, and coordinating local programs with the organization. The chapters would also represent PAOT, Inc. in the region and/or province with regard to issues vital to the profession and ensure participation of members. The establishment of local chapters would also help in fostering an organization that is aware and sensitive to the needs unique to each community. Creation of chapters across the country will optimize implementation of policies, dissemination of information, and interaction among members.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, this may also assist in the attainment of the goal of the academy to attain 1:20,000 ratio of occupational therapists to the population (or 0.5 per 10,000) by 2025,

### Statement of the position being taken

The PAOT, Inc. encourages the institutionalization of chapters in all regions and/or provinces in the country.<sup>3</sup> Chapters shall work in line with the national strategy and agenda. It will function as an interdependent unit following the roles and responsibilities stated in the *Guidelines on the Institution and Governance of PAOT Chapters*<sup>2</sup> however, it must still adhere to laws and policies stated by PAOT, Inc. . The institutionalization of chapters would:

- improve the promotion of OT as a profession;
- improve and maintain the standard of OT practice;
- establish coordination between the national organization and the PAOT chapters which is important for the dynamic growth of OT;
- improve communication which is vital for the efficiency of the national organization in upholding its nationwide functions;
- serve as a physical representation of PAOT responding to the contextual concerns of the region or province;<sup>2</sup> and
- relay issues of both local and national concern to the national professional organization for appropriate action.

## **Statement of the significance of the position to Philippine occupational therapy and occupational therapists**

With the increasing number of occupational therapists in the Philippines coming from all local levels and the continuous development of the profession in the country, there is a need to establish a better system of communication between the national professional organization and its members outside the area of Metro Manila.<sup>1</sup> The institution of local chapters is seen as the best way to create a unified, goal- directed, and sustainable linkages among Filipino occupational therapists.<sup>2</sup> The establishment of local chapters would:

- improve and maintain the standards of practice across the country;
- improve communication and collaboration between the national organization and PAOT members and OT practitioners in all regions;
- promote unity and cooperation among OT practitioners and strengthen the thrust for the improvement of the profession and the organization;
- provide PAOT members and OT practitioners a physical presence of the organization;
- provide timely and immediate answers to the members' and practitioner's queries, requests, and concerns;
- increase opportunities for continuing professional education through seminars, workshops, and forums; and
- promote membership among OT practitioners in the local community which may entitle them to receive the benefits of being a PAOT member if they apply.

## **Statement of the significance of the position to society/client**

Every client has their right to quality health care services.<sup>4</sup> Through the creation of local chapters, the national professional organization will be physically represented in the communities. This may improve awareness on what occupational therapy is. More awareness leads to better feedback regarding the occupational therapy practice in the region and/or province. Feedback may come in the form of complaints and/or suggestions which could be forwarded to the local chapter and then to the national professional organization as necessary. Better feedback leads to a more sensitive approach of therapy unique to the needs of each community. Improved feedback would also help in refining and regulating the standard of practice the Filipino community receives. Local chapters can also improve communication, coordination, and dissemination of information through seminars, forums, and programs which can aid in the advancement in knowledge of OT practice for each local community. Participation of occupational therapists in these programs will help them improve and update their practice.

## **Conclusion**

The institution and governance of local chapters is in line with PAOT's mission to foster a strong fellowship and unity among its members and OT practitioners. An updated system of communication would bring efficiency in planning, coordination, and implementation of local programs sensitive to the unique needs of both the local client and

OT community. A physical presence of the national professional organization would also promote the profession and increase awareness among the members of the community. Therefore, PAOT recommends occupational therapists in the local communities especially outside Metro Manila to establish chapters as guided by the *Guidelines on the Institution and Governance of PAOT Chapters*. With the establishment of these chapters, PAOT aims to achieve the goal of 0.5 per 10,000 ratio by 2025.<sup>2</sup>

**Prepared by the Committee on Legislations and the Committee on Standards & Ethics  
for the Philippine Academy of Occupational Therapists, Inc.**

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