

OT Advocacy in Action

2026 Highlights

Protecting Occupational Therapy Across California

OTAC has maintained a strong, year-round advocacy presence with lawmakers, regulators, educators, and state agencies. Our work protects OT practice, promotes access to services, and strengthens the profession's future.

Defending OT Scope of Practice Submitted detailed amendments and a formal letter of concern on AB 2497 (Physical Therapy Modernization Act), challenging overly broad physical therapy language that could blur professional boundaries in self-care, work and community participation, behavioral health, and other areas central to occupational therapy). The bill failed on May 28, 2026 on the Assembly floor. Member Value: Protects practitioners' ability to provide the services they are educated and licensed to deliver while reducing encroachment by other professions.	Supporting Strong OT Regulation Submitted multiple letters supporting AB 2773, which would extend the California Board of Occupational Therapy to 2031 and recognize supervised entry-level doctoral capstone experiences within the Practice Act. Signed by Governor Newsom on 9.14.26! Member Value: Promotes a stable, current regulatory system that supports licensure, recognizes doctoral capstone experiences, and protects the future of OT practice in California.
Protecting Consumers and Care Quality OTAC asked the California Board of Occupational Therapy (CBOT) whether non-occupational therapy providers offering sensory integration and sensory processing (SI/SP) services could be practicing occupational therapy without a license. CBOT indicated that it does not have authority to regulate other professions but plans to launch a public education campaign highlighting occupational therapy practitioners' role in SI/SP. OTAC also urged the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) to strengthen entry-level training in upper-extremity surgical procedures and postoperative care, addressing gaps in preparation for advanced practice in California. Member Value: Strengthens public confidence in occupational therapy and protects both consumers and providers of occupational therapy services.	Expanding Workforce Opportunities On behalf of students, OTAC asked the Medi-Cal Behavioral Health Scholarship Program to explain why entry-level OTD students were ineligible for funding and to extend eligibility to doctoral-level students, rather than limiting it to master's-level students. OTAC met with program representatives to discuss the request and is awaiting a final decision for the next scholarship cycle. Expanding eligibility would support students and help strengthen California's occupational therapy workforce in mental and behavioral health. Member Value: Advocates for greater access to scholarship funding, reduced financial barriers for OTD students, and expanded opportunities in mental and behavioral health practice.
Fighting for Access and Reimbursement Convened a statewide occupational therapy provider forum and formally raised concerns with California's Department of Developmental Services (DDS) about early start rate reform, reduced provider participation, and growing service delays for infants and toddlers. Awaiting decisions by DDS to address areas of concern which were submitted in an 8-page letter. Member Value: Gives practitioners a collective voice with state agencies on reimbursement and policies that affect provider sustainability and clients' access to occupational therapy (OT) services.	Tracking Policy and Mobilizing Members Provided ongoing legislative updates, monitored practice-relevant bills, supported AB 1979 patient privacy safeguards for health-care AI, and convened a member forum on major federal changes affecting Medicaid, Medicare, reimbursement, and the OT workforce with the passage and implementation of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (H.R. 1). Member Value: Saves members time by providing timely, credible updates and clear opportunities to act on legislation affecting practice, reimbursement, and client care.

OTAC works year-round to protect the scope, access, and future of occupational therapy in California.