Representative Assembly Fall 2023 Meeting Summary

During the November 15, 2023, meeting, four motions and four requests for action from members were discussed and voted on. The outcomes are as follows.

Motions

Motion 1: Societal Statement on Reproductive Health was approved.

This motion came from the Post-Dobbs Task Force report to create a societal statement based on their findings. A report from the Vice Speaker included this recommendation in a list of recommendations for the RA to consider. Societal concerns exist for occupational deprivation and occupational injustice that will affect birthing persons, particularly those in minority communities; a societal statement can further explore the implications of this concern. Individuals may find access to OT services more psychologically and physically safe than access to other providers.

Motion 2: Position Statement on OT Role in Pelvic Health was amended and approved.

This statement will support advocacy efforts and occupational therapy practitioners working in this practice area. The profession must highlight the crucial role occupational therapy plays and emphasize its significance. A position statement will support the needs of our service recipients and communities, adding value to the profession. There are occupational therapy practitioners currently working in pelvic health who require prompt and effective support in practice, and it is an area of interest for students who will be entering practice in the next 1 to 2 years. Clients need services provided by well-trained and competent occupational therapy practitioners, and this statement can support parameters to achieve that expectation. The motion was amended, which adjusted the timeline from Spring 2025 to Fall 2024.

Motion 3: Task Force to Establish Model Competencies in Reproductive & Pelvic Health was approved.

The Post-Dobbs Task Force report recommended the creation of these competencies based on their findings. A report from the Vice Speaker included this recommendation in a list of recommendations for the RA to consider. Recommendations included that the Commissions consider distinguishing specialty from non-specialty level skills in the creation of these competencies, as many skills in this area are considered advanced practice.

Motion 4: Policy Guidance on School-Based Practice was amended and approved.

This motion originated from the Affiliated State Association Presidents (ASAP). The motion requested that AOTA develop national professional policy guidance related to school-based practice to inform and guide legislative actions at the federal and state levels. The Association will:

- Develop a policy for eligibility of OT practitioners to serve in administrative roles across a variety of practice settings, specifically noting public school systems.
- Develop a workload model and recommended ratio of student population to OTP that can be applied and utilized nationally for advocacy and best practice.
- Develop national guidelines for providing school occupational therapy services that include both OTs and OTAs that align with our full scope of practice as defined by the *OTPF-4* and comply with federal and state education laws and regulations (e.g., IDEA, ESSA).

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Requests for Action

Member Request for RA Action 1: School Practice Action Plan was approved.

The RA will establish a work group with representation from the Commission on Practice (COP), Commission on Continuing Competency and Professional Development (CCCPD), Representative Assembly (RA), and other community members (e.g., state leaders in school based community of practice [CoP]) to investigate the following and develop an action plan to address identified issues:

- Ensuring consistency and continued competence in providing school OT services that align with our full scope of practice as defined by the *OTPF-4* and comply with federal and state education laws and regulations (e.g., IDEA, ESSA).
- Identifying opportunities and challenges related to advancing careers of school occupational therapy practitioners and enabling pathways to leadership.
- Identifying discrepancies in terms of parity (e.g., hiring practices, compensation, benefits, professional development) between school OT practitioners and professionals certified by their state education agency.

Member Request for RA Action 2: Pelvic Health Position Statement was defeated (addressed in Motion #2).

Defeat means that the RA determined this topic does not warrant further exploration at this time given other professional priorities. This request was a duplication of Motion #2, which was approved.

Member Request for RA Action 3: Official Document on Workload Approach in School-Based Practice was defeated (addressed in Motion #4).

Defeat means that the RA determined that this topic does not warrant further exploration at this time given other professional priorities. This request was a duplication of Motion #4, which was approved.

Member Request for RA Action 4: Professional Policy to Affirm the Occupational Impact of being Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) was approved.

The RA will establish a work group to develop a briefing paper to explore development of a professional policy that serves to affirm the occupational impact of being Black, Indigenous, and Other People of Color (BIPOC) in our society, as well as defining baseline expectations of occupational therapy practitioners, students, educators, and researchers with regards to understanding, interacting, and engaging with people of different races and ethnicities.

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