



Winter 2019

## Inside this issue:

Letter from the President	1
Board of Health Clarification Statement	2
Reimbursement News	4
Membership News	6
Conference News	7
District News	8
School News	10

## A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Seasons greetings! I love the holidays and I always look forward to favorite holiday traditions. For our family, that means attending church on Christmas Eve, decorating cookies for Santa, and spending treasured time with family and friends. It's helpful to remember that our clients may have extra stressors and sensory input this holiday season. I encourage us all as occupational therapy practitioners to be mindful of the additional "occupations" that we and our clients have this time of year and let's integrate some of the fun into our practice.



It's a busy time for us at MSOTA, too! We have so many great things in store for 2020! Stay tuned for important events that take place at the first of the year! Legislative Day is slated for January 29. February 29 is the date for our annual conference that has so many great educational offerings, so I hope you'll make plans to attend! Watch our Facebook and Instagram postings for more fun info.

Lastly, in times of industry shakeups and reimbursement changes as are occurring now, the importance of being a member of your state and national professional organization is crucial. We are seeing the benefit of collaborating to protect the interests of practitioners and clients. If your colleagues are not members, remind them how much it matters! We have multi-year options for renewals and drawings for prizes during our membership drive. Come join us on our journey to promote and protect occupational therapy in Mississippi!

Kelly Crawford, DHA, MSM, OTR/L

## MSOTA AT WORK FOR YOU:

### MSOTA and MS OT Advisory Council Collaborate for Clarification

Many thanks to our members for bringing to our attention the increased use of aides/techs in the field and concerns about billing issues related to their use. The Mississippi Advisory Council for Occupational Therapy was quick to jump in and collaborate with the MSOTA Board in issuing a clarification to the state regulations in regards to this issue. This clarification was issued to all licensed practitioners in the state in November. It is reprinted below for your review in case you missed the initial email.



### Mississippi Board of Health Occupational Therapy Professional Licensure Division

#### Clarification Statement: Use of Aides/Techs/Assistants Unlicensed in Occupational Therapy

An aide, tech, care tech, assistant unlicensed in occupational therapy or any variation of these terms is a person unlicensed as an occupational therapy practitioner and therefore subject to the limitations of an Occupational Therapy Aide as defined in Rule 8.1.3, #12 of the *Regulations Governing Licensure of Occupational Therapists and Occupational Therapy Assistants*. Rule 8.1.3, #12 states that a person functioning as an aide may "assist occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants in the practice of occupational therapy under direct supervision". Rule 8.1.3, #12 and #14 collectively define the aide's function as "assisting" the licensed occupational therapy practitioner under "direct supervision". These two distinctions specify that the aide or tech cannot independently treat a patient; however, the unlicensed individual may assist the licensed practitioner in the delivery of care. The individual who is not licensed as an OT practitioner may assist the licensed OT practitioner in the delivery of care/treatment only in the direct presence of the licensed OT practitioner with the same patient or group of patients. If an aide, tech, care tech, or any assistant not licensed in OT by MS professional licensure were to independently treat a patient under an occupational therapy plan of care, regardless of whether the services are billed or not, this would be a violation of Mississippi Occupational Therapy Practice Law. Any licensed practitioner who instructs an unlicensed individual to perform treatment independently with a patient who is being treated under a skilled occupational therapy plan of care will be in violation of state regulations and subject to sanctions against their license by the Mississippi State Department of Health Professional Licensure Division. Any individual not licensed as an occupational therapy practitioner does not possess the knowledge or expertise to administer exercises or treatment(s) designed to achieve goals within a skilled plan of care regardless of any amount of on the job training the unlicensed individual has received. Job functions that the individual who is not licensed as an OT practitioner can perform independently are transporting patients to and from treatment, set up of the treatment area, cleanup of the treatment area, and/or any office duties not involving patient contact.

The Mississippi Advisory Council will be joining us again at our Annual Conference in February. They will review this recent clarification as well as other state regulations and answer any questions that our membership may have in regards to state licensure and regulation issues. If you have a question or issue that you would like for them to specifically address, please email [mississippiota@gmail.com](mailto:mississippiota@gmail.com) and we will pass it on to the Advisory Council to cover during their presentation.

## LEGISLATIVE DAY 2020

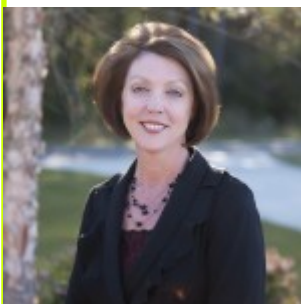
January 29, 2020

We are gearing up for another great Legislative Day in January! **Save the date for January 29, 2020 for this event.** MSOTA will be sponsoring our annual Legislative Day at the Capitol in downtown Jackson. This is a come and go event from 7:30 a.m. until 11:30 a.m. We will have students and practitioners from all over the state there to represent our organization. The larger our numbers; the larger our voice! We will be meeting and greeting our legislators in the Rotunda of the Capitol Building. Also, if you have a legislator with whom you would like to meet; this is a great opportunity to do so.



If you do not know your legislator, you can visit our website at [www.mississipiota.org](http://www.mississipiota.org). Go to the Membership tab and click on the State Legislative Efforts page to access a link that will help you identify your respective legislator. If there is someone you would like for us to meet or reach out to, contact Glenda Hux, MSOTA Legislative Chair. Hope to see you there!

## News from the MSOTA Reimbursement Chair Amanda Jordan, OTR/L



There's a lot going on as we wind down 2019 and move into 2020!

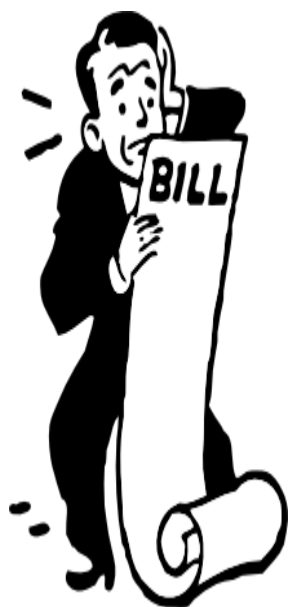
**PATIENT DRIVEN PAYMENT MODEL (PDPM):** The new Patient Driven Payment Model began October 01, 2019. This new payment model replaced the old RUG IV classification system and affected those who are billing for

Medicare Part A Services (mostly SNF's and Inpatient rehab facilities). AOTA's Quality Team has been collecting stories from OT practitioners throughout the US and sharing those stories with CMS as they have been concerned with the reaction of some companies in laying off SNF staff and mandating group therapy policies. AOTA has published several of these concerns with comments from the SNF and these can be viewed on the AOTA website. AOTA has also had stories submitted of organizations working with practitioners to strengthen clinical judgement and collaborating to identify the right amount and mode of interventions.

**PATIENT DRIVEN GROUPINGS MODEL (PDGM):** The new Patient Driven Groupings Model will begin on January 01, 2020 for all home health agencies. It replaces the old Home Health Groupings Model (HHGM) that CMS introduced and then discontinued in 2017. PDGM was required by the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 and was developed to rely more heavily on clinical characteristics and other patient information to place home health periods of care into meaningful payment categories and eliminates the use of therapy service thresholds. In conjunction with the implementation of the PDGM, there will be a change in the unit of home health payment from a 60-day episode to a 30-day period.

**Med B Cuts:** The CY2020 Medicare Physician Fee Schedule was finalized on November 01, 2019. AOTA was very pleased with the results of their efforts as well as the over 9,000 comments CMS received on the issue of the payment cuts and other related issues with the initial proposal. The following changes to the proposed policies were finalized by CMS:

- **Concurrent Services:** CMS acknowledged that it is not appropriate to reduce payment when an OT and an OTA are working concurrently on the same patient. The OTA modifier will only apply to time where the OTA is performing the service independently.
- **Units of Service Furnished Separately:** CMS acknowledged that it is more appropriate to apply the OTA modifier at the unit level rather than at the service level. The OTA modifier calculation will apply to untimed codes and to timed codes at the 15-minute unit level. For example, when the OTA performs 15 minutes of 97530 and the OT performs 30 minutes, the modifier should be applied to one 15-minute unit of 97530 rather than to all three.



## Continued News from the MSOTA Reimbursement Chair Amanda Jordan, OTR/L

- **Administrative Burden:** CMS acknowledged that the additional documentation requirement would place undue burden, and they are not including it. CMS reminds therapists that the documentation should be sufficient to support the codes billed and the units applied to the modifier.
- **Impact on Rural Areas:** CMS acknowledged AOTA's concerns, but stated they did not believe it was within their power to exempt rural areas. CMS will monitor any changes caused by the modifier implementation. This means AOTA may have the opportunity to revisit this issue in the future.
- **Potential 8% Payment Cut to Therapy Services in 2021:** In the Final Rule, CMS did accept the increases to the Evaluation and Management (E&M) values in 2021. However, CMS also acknowledged AOTA's concerns with the negative impact of a payment redistribution of this magnitude to occupational therapy services. At this time, CMS has determined it is too premature to solidify a strategy for 2021, and AOTA's concerns will be considered in future rulemaking. AOTA intends to intensify advocacy efforts with CMS through in-person meetings, letter writing, and future rulemaking commentary.
- **2020 Therapy KX Modifier Threshold Amount:** The KX Modifier threshold amount for occupational therapy has been increased to \$2,080 from \$2,040 in 2019. The targeted medical review process threshold remains at \$3,000.
- **Cognitive Function Intervention:** The American Medical Association (AMA) has created two new CPT® codes for cognitive intervention in 2020: 97129 and 97130. CMS accepted these codes for inclusion in the 2020 fee schedule. CMS will no longer require practitioners to use G0515 for cognition. G0515 will be deleted from the code manual in 2020.

**97129** Therapeutic interventions that focus on cognitive function (e.g., attention, memory, reasoning, executive functioning, problem solving, and/or pragmatic functioning) and compensatory strategies to manage the performance of an activity (e.g., managing time or schedules, initiating, organizing, and sequencing tasks), direct (one-to-one) patient contact; initial 15 minutes

**97130** Each additional 15 minutes

The new codes are 15-minute timed codes, but they follow the description of the current cognitive intervention code 97127. Note that 97130 is an add-on code that will need to be billed with 97129 whenever more than one 15-minute unit is performed. The current untimed code 97127 will be deleted.

# Membership News

We have exciting events coming for our members!

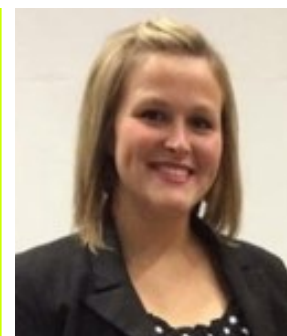
Be on the lookout for a membership drive in the month of December. There will be an opportunity for current members to help build membership and to get a gift card for their referrals. MSOTA is an organization that exists to serve members. The best way for us to protect and promote OT practitioners in Mississippi, is for them to be members. We need your help to achieve our goals with a membership drive! Make sure we have the most current contact information for you, and that you follow us on social media in order to receive more information about the membership drive when it is released.

We will also need your help with our new plans to highlight our outstanding members and to celebrate our graduating OT/OTA students. More information to come!

If you have ideas about how we can better serve our membership, or would like to help with upcoming events, please contact me at [h\\_calnan@bellsouth.net](mailto:h_calnan@bellsouth.net).



Refer 3 MSOTA members to win gift cards through month of December



Heather Calnan,  
Membership Chair

## 2019

### **SPECIAL MSOTA MEMBERSHIPS**

#### **MAGNOLIA**

LISA POE

#### **COTTON**

AMANDA JORDAN

### **STUDENT SPONSORS**

KAYLA ABRAHAM

CHERI NIPP

ROBIN PARISH

CHRIS THISTLE

MSOTA THANKS  
THESE MEMBERS FOR  
THE EXTRA  
INVESTMENT IN OUR  
ASSOCIATION and  
STUDENTS!





**GREAT  
OPPORTUNITY  
FOR 7 CEUs  
BEFORE 2020  
LICENSURE  
RENEWALS**



## The MSOTA Spotlight is on...

### Annual Conference: Be sure to Save the DATE FEBRUARY 29, 2020

The MSOTA Annual Conference will be held on February 29, 2020 at the Clyde Muse Center in Pearl, MS. We are excited to be offering another speaker from AOTA this year! Hillary Richardson, the program manager of Evidence-Based Practice at AOTA, will be presenting "Choosing Wisely: Five Things Practitioners and Patients Should Question." Hillary will open our conference with a general assembly for all that morning. We will hold our annual membership meeting during lunch then follow with the Mississippi Advisory Council to discuss recent state regulation clarifications and answer any questions we may have. The afternoon will include several break out sessions for students, pediatric practitioners, and other hot topic items. A full agenda and registration forms will be published and distributed to the membership by the end of the year. You will not want to miss this 7.0 hour CEU event!

If you are interested in participating as a sponsor or vendor, this opportunity is now available. Contact MSOTA and learn how you can participate as either. This event is a great opportunity to get your name and/or product out as well as recruit staff for your organization. We have had over 175 attendees in the past several years and are growing every year!



**MARK YOUR CALENDARS NOW**

**FEBRUARY 29**

**CLYDE MUSE CENTER**

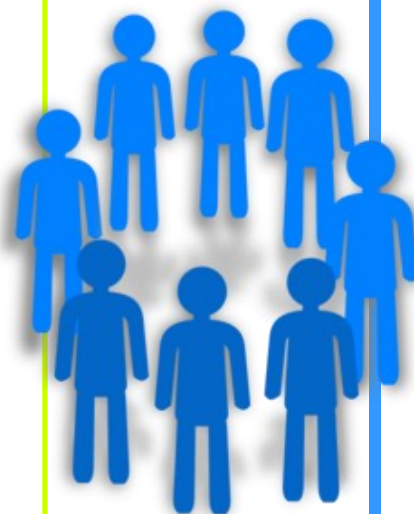
**PEARL MS**

**WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING  
YOU THERE!**

## MSOTA DISTRICT NEWS

### CENTRAL DISTRICT NEWS

Kenley Smith and Jennifer Donahue, Central District cochairs, hosted a mini conference at UMMC-SHRP on November 7, 2019. Trent Adkins, OTR/L spoke on PDPM and recent changes with Medicare. There were over 45 practitioners in attendance, as this is becoming a large topic of discussion with many OTs that are treating adult populations. There will be additional continuing Ed at our spring conference in February to address documentation with Medicare changes and other areas that are of great interest in the OT community.



### COASTAL DISTRICT NEWS

The Coastal District hosted another CEU event Saturday, July 27, 2019, for 3 free CEUs or .3 contact hours for MSOTA members. MSOTA Central District Co-Chair, Kenley Smith, MOTR/L, presented “Primitive Reflexes: A Review” to an audience of primarily pediatric OT professionals at the Southern Star Masonic Lodge in Long Beach, MS. She discussed the relationship and ramifications of prolonged reflexes in young children to different disorders such as sensory integration attention deficit disorder (ADD). The Coastal District will host another event in the Spring of 2020 following the Spring MSOTA Conference Saturday, February 29, 2020, to be determined.





## MSOTA DISTRICT NEWS

### MERIDIAN DISTRICT

Holiday greetings,

I will be scheduling a meeting/CEU event for the Meridian District following the Annual Conference. At this meeting, I want to plan for future meeting dates and social gatherings for Meridian District members. I would also like to elect a co-chair for the District. If you are interested in the co-chair position or need more information about the responsibilities, please feel free to contact me. Also, if you have suggestions about future CEU topics; I'd be happy to discuss those with you. I can be reached at 601-553-6718.

Thank you for your continued support of MSOTA.

Have a blessed holiday, Scott White



MOSTA MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

WE INVITE YOU TO GET INVOLVED AT YOUR DISTRICT LEVEL



## SCHOOL NEWS

### Itawamba Community College

As we close the fall semester at ICC we are grateful for our students and all of the support we receive from our college, community, industry partners and our wonderful fieldwork educators. In August, we welcomed 14 freshmen students and sent 13 sophomores out on their second fieldwork rotation. The semester, as always, was extremely busy, but all students were able to demonstrate great accomplishments, both academically and clinically. We had informed students, day one of the semester, that there would be a lot of hard work, but in between taking tests, writing papers, completing projects, and finishing up fieldwork requirements, we think they were also able to have a little fun!

Following a much needed Christmas break, we should, hopefully, be rested and ready to dive back in to the spring semester. Along with all of the general academic requirements there will also be lots of occasions to participate in community service activities. Some of those already scheduled include "A Night to Shine" and "Ronald McDonald House." These are always great experiences and we are so blessed to be able to give back to the community through these service opportunities.

The ICC Family would like to wish all a blessed and joyous Christmas season!



## SCHOOL NEWS

### Pearl River Community College

Pearl River Community College's Occupational Assistant Program would like to take this opportunity to share how thankful we are for our wonderful clinical instructors in the field!



Wishing everyone a Happy Holiday season and a Very Merry Everything!





## SCHOOL NEWS Continued

### University of Mississippi Medical Center

The OT program at UMMC has been very busy this fall semester. All three classes were on campus as they worked hard to complete another semester. There are too many activities to list them all, but here are a few things our OT students have been doing this fall as part of their courses.

We hosted students from Holmes Community College and Itawamba Community College for a session on Intraprofessionalism. Second year OT students joined the OTA students for a variety of presentations and learning activities throughout the afternoon. Special thanks to the program directors from the OTA programs for supporting this initiative. Another second year service learning project involved SONValley's Annual Fall Festival where our students led a variety of booths for those served by SONValley. Third year students completed a community service project for the opportunity center which serves homeless individuals in Jackson, and they also conducted a very successful community health advocacy program "health fair" in partnership with the PT students. Near 200 community participants came to participate in the health fair. First year students engaged in two additional projects to promote OT in the community one which centered around AOTAs Backpack Awareness Campaign.



Our third year students are preparing to begin their final level II fieldwork in January. We appreciate each and every fieldwork educator who supports this aspect of our program. In addition, we had many OT guest speakers this semester in a variety of classes. We appreciate your willingness to give back in this way to our program.

One of our guest speakers was none other than our very own MSOTA president (Dr. Kelly Crawford) who visited with our OTs to discuss the importance of membership participation in our profession's state association. She was joined by Dr. Peter Giroux as MS AOTA Representative Assemblyperson. They emphasized seeking ways to serve and become leaders in our vital organizations to our profession.





## CONTACT US MSOTA

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## MSOTA WEBSITE

RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP ONLINE!

[mississippiota.org](http://mississippiota.org)



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THERAPY ASSOCIATION

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### WHY SHOULD YOU BE A MEMBER?

Keeping you up-to-date on current events at the state and national level via the website, newsletters, and email blasts.

Giving you access to a member only portion of our website to define your profile and network with other members throughout the state.

Having a voice in regards to your profession through MSOTA sponsored surveys, elections, and District meetings.

#### Quick Links

[Back to My Community](#)

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#### MSOTA Calendar

No events

[View Full Calendar](#)