

ADVOCACY IN ACTION

Modernizing New Jersey's Occupational Therapy Practice Act



NJOTA President, Dr. Felicia Chew and Legislative Co-Chair, Dr. Emily Balog testifying during a Senate hearing committee along with NJPSI Lobbyist, Sam Bender.

From Conversation to Legislation

Modernizing New Jersey's Occupational Therapy Practice Act has been a multi-year effort built upon relationships, collaboration, and a shared commitment to advancing occupational therapy in New Jersey. What began as conversations about how best to reflect contemporary occupational therapy practice evolved into meetings with legislators and policymakers, committee testimony, collaboration with state agencies and professional leaders, and sustained advocacy across multiple legislative sessions.

Today, we celebrate an important legislative milestone as Senate Bill S1493 has passed both houses of the New Jersey Legislature and has been signed into law by Governor Sherrill. This accomplishment reflects the collective efforts of NJOTA leaders, members, legislative sponsors, advocacy partners, and policymakers who have worked together to strengthen occupational therapy practice for the future.



Legislative Co-Chairs Emily Balog and Stephanie Cosgrove along with State Liaison Chair, Mariann Moran, after testifying in the Assembly

Advocacy Partners

Legislative Sponsors

- **Senator Joseph P. Cryan (District 20) – Sponsor, Senate Bill S1493**
- **Assemblyman Sterley S. Stanley (District 18) – Sponsor, Assembly Bill A3381**

Legislative Support

- **Senator Robert W. Singer (District 30)**
- **Assemblywoman Luanne M. Peterpaul (District 11)**
- **Assemblywoman Margie Donlon (District 11)**
- **Assemblyman Anthony S. Verrelli (District 15)**
- **Staff of Assemblyman Anthony S. Verrelli (District 15)**
- **Assemblywoman Shama A. Haider (District 37)**
- **Assemblyman Eddie Freeman Tully (District 38)**
- **Senator Joseph A. Lagana (District 38)**
- **Assemblywoman Margie Donlon (District 11)**
- **Assemblywoman Shanique Speight (District 29)**
- **Assemblyman Michael Inganamort Azzariti, Jr. (District 39)**
- **Assemblyman Gerry Scharfenberger, Ph.D. (District 13)**
- **Assemblywoman Carol A. Murphy (District 7)**

Senate Bill S1493

- ✓ Commerce Committee
- ✓ Budget & Appropriations Committee
- ✓ Passed Senate Floor

Assembly Bill A3381

- ✓ Regulated Professions Committee
- ✓ Health Committee
- ✓ Budget Committee
- ✓ Passed Assembly Floor

Current Status: **signed** into law by Governor Sherrill

"Congratulations...the bill includes first of its kind occupational therapy scope language ...this line in particular: *'Occupational therapy services may also be provided to address parental health; women's health; pelvic health and intimacy; LGBTQIA+ issues; sports and concussion management; disaster preparedness and emergency management; and population health management.'* -Chuck Wilmark, AOTA

Modern Practice. Future Possibilities.

This legislation modernizes New Jersey's Occupational Therapy Practice Act to reflect the evolving role of occupational therapy practitioners and the needs of the communities we serve.

Updates include contemporary practice language that recognizes today's occupational therapy practice, continuing competence requirements that lay the foundation for New Jersey's future participation in the Occupational Therapy Licensure Compact, and licensure provisions that align with current national standards while strengthening the profession's ability to meet emerging healthcare needs across practice settings.

Advocacy doesn't end when legislation passes. The modernization of New Jersey's Occupational Therapy Practice Act represents one important milestone in NJOTA's ongoing commitment to advancing occupational therapy practice in New Jersey.

We now await the drafting of the regulations by the **NJ OT Advisory Council**. There are **2 vacant seats** that need to be filled. Please reach out if you are interested in filling this role.

Together, we will continue shaping policy, expanding opportunities for practitioners, and strengthening the future of the profession. We invite you to join NJOTA and be part of what's next.

Join NJOTA!



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