

March 25, 2024

The Honorable Joseph J. Soloman, Jr.  
Chairperson, House Corporations Committee  
Rhode Island State House  
Providence, RI 02903

**Re: Support for House Bill 7945, Occupational Therapy Licensure Compact**

Dear Chairperson Soloman:

On behalf of AOTA, and in collaboration with the Rhode Island Occupational Therapy Association, I am writing in support of HB 7945, which would adopt the Occupational Therapy Practice Interstate Compact (OT Compact).

The American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) is the national professional association representing the interests of more than 213,000 occupational therapists, students of occupational therapy, and occupational therapy assistants. AOTA was established to represent the interests and concerns of occupational therapy practitioners and students, and to improve the quality of occupational therapy services.

Much like the existing licensure compacts for nurses, physical therapists, physicians, psychologists, and EMS personnel, the OT Compact will increase licensure portability while allowing member state regulatory boards to better protect consumers through enhanced sharing of licensure information. Existing interstate compacts have been successful in reducing barriers for practitioners who wish to provide services in other states.

The OT Compact utilizes a “mutual recognition” model of interstate practice, whereby Compact member states agree to “recognize” valid licenses issued by other member states. This approach is made possible by the fact that core licensure requirements for occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants are virtually the same across all 50 states. To obtain a compact privilege to practice in a remote state, an occupational therapist or occupational therapy assistant must have a license in good standing in their home state (primary state of residence) and the home state must be a member of the OT Compact. A compact privilege is equivalent to a license to practice occupational therapy in a remote member state.

The OT Compact will benefit consumers, our members, and the profession in Rhode Island by:

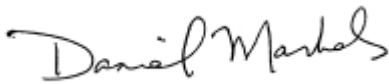
- Enhancing mobility for occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants;
- Increasing access to occupational therapy services for clients;
- Facilitating continuity of care when clients or practitioners relocate or travel to another state;
- Allowing military personnel and spouses to more easily maintain their certifications when relocating;

- Creating an alternative path to licensure for compact privilege holders who change their primary state of residence between two compact member states;
- Improving communication between states by mandating full participation in a licensing and disciplinary data system, ensuring that all adverse actions and disciplinary sanctions are reported regularly, and facilitating sharing of investigatory information;
- Requiring criminal background checks; and
- Preserving and strengthening the current system of state licensure.

Importantly, the OT Compact preserves each member state's authority to regulate the profession. Practitioners utilizing the OT Compact must abide by the laws and rules of the state in which they are practicing, including adhering to that state's scope of practice.

We urge the Committee to pass HB 7945 and thank you for your consideration. Please contact me at 240-752-1174 or via email at [dmarkels@aota.org](mailto:dmarkels@aota.org) if you have any questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Daniel Markels". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Daniel Markels  
Manager, State Legislative Affairs  
American Occupational Therapy Association

cc: Members of the House Corporations Committee