

AOTPAC and AOTA ***Federal Affairs Department***



– Political Advocacy and Legislative Action

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Will OT Survive in the 21st Century?

- Federal and State Legislative Issues Affect YOU . . .
- Where and how you practice
- What you are paid
- Whether or not you have a job



PROFESSIONAL SURVIVAL

- ❑ Need for strong, effective professional organizations
- ❑ Recognition of importance of profession by others
 - **OT is now a covered service under hospice care**
 - **Need for OT for Older Americans**
 - **Included in IDEA and NCLB**
 - **Return to Prominence in Mental Health**



IDEA and NCLB Reauthorization

- **IDEA 2004 *PASSED*** and signed by the President
 - AOTA was successful in getting language supportive of Occupational Therapy included in the compromise legislation and subsequent regulations
 - It **affirms** the importance of related services – which includes **OT** – for students with disabilities

- **NCLB to be reauthorized in 2007**
 - Alignment with IDEA
 - Expanded role for OT
 - RtI, PBS, UDL



The future for Occupational Therapy is Bright, but.....?

- The **need** for **what we** do will continue to grow in the future.
- But will the **need for us** continue to grow?
- Will there be **funding for Occupational Therapy programs?**
- Will there be **Occupational Therapy Jobs?**



Scope of Practice Issues

- ❑ Athletic Trainers are **expanding** their practice act to include “functional restoration” ...
- ❑ Athletic Trainers have introduced legislation to provide OT “incident to” physician services.

Access to Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Services Improvement Act (H.R. 1846)



Scope Issues continued

- Low Vision Specialists are now **accepted** to work with vision impaired clients.
- Developmental therapists acting as early intervention gate keepers.
- Medicaid restrictions on the Rehabilitation Services Option.



Scope continued...

- ❑ Physical Therapists are **expanding** their practice act nationwide to include language specific to **activities of daily living and improving function**.
- ❑ The APTA has an active plan to gain **direct access** for Physical Therapy in every state
- ❑ Physical Therapy is going to **doctoral degree entry level**.



Not Only are Others Encroaching on Our Profession but

- ❑ **Growing** Federal budget deficit
- ❑ Federal budget has either decreases funding (3 % - 5 %) for many programs and services or level funds allocations for next year.



President Bush's Budget has Decreases in Funding for Many Programs

- ❑ I.D.E.A. not fully funded
- ❑ Medicare and Medicaid payments for programs and providers decreasing
- ❑ Funding for psychiatric and psychological services are decreasing
- ❑ Research funds decreasing **This was before Katrina and the ongoing War on Terror !**



Medicare \$ 1,500 Cap continued, again.....

- ❑ Current Medicare Therapy Cap exception process due to expire at year end.
- ❑ However, with discretionary funding being held to inflation or even reduced,
**What do you think the likelihood is
Congress will increase funding in
Medicare?**



How do they decide what to cut?

- Congress is inundated with literally thousands of lobbyists, each promoting the benefits of their concerns over others. Literally everyone has a lobbyist fighting for their cause
- Remember, for one program to be included in funding means someone else will be reduced!



Lobbyists

- APTA has 3 ½ full time paid lobbyists
- Nurse Anesthetists have 4 full time paid lobbyists
- AOTA has 2 full time paid lobbyists!



The Reality Is

- ❑ 90% + of all the Occupational Therapy services provided in the country receive federal funds to pay for their services
- ❑ This could result in **some difficult times for Occupational Therapy as a profession** over the next 5 – 7 years



The Need Continues...

The reality is, that in today's environment, without a strong professional organization, with strong lobbying capabilities, and a strong P.A.C., watching out for our profession every day, one day soon we will not have a profession...

Or Jobs!



American Occupational Therapy Political Action Committee - AOTPAC

- ❑ PAC's were established by congress to give *like minded* citizens a means to raise money to support candidates for office who support their issues
- ❑ It is the **only** legal means for an organization to raise and disperse funds to candidates for public office



AOTA and AOTPAC

- ❑ By law, no organization can give financial aid to a candidate running for office
- ❑ ***NONE*** of your AOTA dues can go to support political candidates
- ❑ ***ONLY*** money raised by AOTPAC can be used to support candidates who support Occupational Therapy
- ❑ AOTPAC can ***ONLY*** accept contributions from ***AOTA members*** if this money is to be given to a political candidate



Campaign Finances

- When we asked to financially support a candidate for state and local office, contributions generally in \$ 25 - \$100 range
- To support a candidate for federal office the contributions we are asked to give are in the \$ 1,000 - \$ 5,000 range.



Cost of the 2004 Presidential and Congressional Elections

\$ 3.5 Billion Dollars!!!

***2008 is likely to break all
fundraising records!***



How AOTPAC Supports Candidates in each state

- ❑ AOTA gets calls almost daily from congressional campaign staff requesting contribution to re-election campaigns
- ❑ AOTPAC Board, with input from the Federal Affairs Department, evaluate candidates based on **their support of OT issues** and their importance on health committees



Campaign Finance

How does Occupational Therapy stack up?

2003 – 2004 Election Cycle

□ APTA

- \$ 1,400,000 Received, \$ 1.1 **Million** Disbursed,
\$ 287,000 Cash on Hand

□ Social Workers

- \$ 1,100,000 Received, \$ 1.2 **Million** Disbursed,
\$ 540,000 Cash on Hand

□ AOTA

- \$ 292,000 Received, \$ 299,000 Disbursed,
\$ 64,000 Cash on Hand



AOTA Membership Concerns...

- ❑ Committee of State Association Presidents said the # 1 priority of the association was having a strong political advocacy support system
- ❑ AOTA members consistently state that a strong political advocacy system is their number one need from the association
- ❑ Yet, less than 15 % of the membership contribute to AOTPAC (up from 2 % in 2003)

AOTPAC

It takes a little from all of us

- AOTA has approximately 35,000 members
- If each member donates \$10 to AOTPAC, AOTA would have \$350,000 to spend on political action to support legislation and officials that ***supports our profession.***



AOTPAC 2004 Scorecard

- Supported 103 Senate and House Candidates in the 2004 General Election
- **99 won!!!!**
- **96 %**



Remember...

You already do so much for the profession. Let's make sure that it's not all for naught!

Make a contribution (or another) today!

Questions / Discussion



Federal Legislative Issues?

AOTPAAC or AOTA Federal Affairs Questions?

AOTA Annual Conference next week in St. Louis

Anything else?

Thank you!



Thank you from **AOTA** and **AOTPAC!**

**We could not do our work or have jobs
without our members!**

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