



Ontario Society of Occupational Therapists

Sent Via Email: contact@kathleenwynne.ca

Honourable Premier Kathleen Wynne
10 St. Mary Street, Suite 210
Toronto, ON M4Y 1P9

May 30, 2014

Dear Honourable Premier Wynne:

I am writing to you at the recommendation of one of your staff members, Mr. Andy Stein, subsequent to a recent conversation he had with a member of the Ontario Society of Occupational Therapists. We are a professional association of more than 3800 occupational therapists across Ontario - hundreds of whom who work in the auto insurance sector providing care to Ontarians injured in motor vehicle accidents.

Our members are concerned about a recent announcement by the Financial Service Commission of Ontario, which will require health service providers that invoice auto insurers through the Health Claims for Auto Insurance (HCAI) system to become licensed. On May 23, 2014, the FSCO and the Ministry of Finance announced the mandatory licensing fees (see <http://www.fSCO.gov.on.ca/en/service-providers/Pages/2014-announcement-fees-apps-deadline.aspx> for announcement), which includes:

1. A one-time initiation fee of \$337 per provider;
2. An annual fee of \$128 per provider; and
3. An annual fee of \$15 per auto insurance claimant.

OSOT is not in support of a secondary level of licensing in this sector given that Occupational Therapists are already regulated through the College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario (COTO). However, we can appreciate that the government made a commitment to implementing this secondary level of licensing to prevent fraud.

OUR CONCERNS WITH FSCO LICENSING

Our concerns about the auto insurance sector are outlined in detail in our March 2014 submission to FSCO on the Three Year Review of Auto Insurance. This included our position on the additional licensing of health providers.

In particular, we are concerned by the seemingly non-transparent and non-collaborative process that was undertaken:

- There was minimal health care professional representation on the committee struck to develop a licensing board;

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- The committee did not consult professional or other associations to seek input on the proposed changes; and
- There was no discussion or negotiation around the new fee structure.

Our members have voiced to our Society and many MPPs that the licensing fee structure and process is excessive and onerous. Many occupational therapists operate as sole practitioners and work in small communities. This new licensing structure will negatively impact their ability to maintain sustainable practices, resulting in Ontarians having less access to care and benefits for which they pay through their auto insurance premiums.

OTs play a critical role in the rehabilitation of individuals injured in motor vehicle accidents including providing assessment, treatment and coordination of care. This care includes facilitating a return to daily living activities; prescription of wheelchairs and other assistive devices; home modifications; vehicle modifications; helping claimants to return to work, home and school roles; assessing for workplace and school modifications; etc. OTs are also recognized by FSCO as one of the two professions that have the skills, knowledge and judgment to assess the need for the attendant care benefit. OTs are leaders in this area of practice and perform the vast majority of attendant care assessments. In the event that OTs can no longer practice in this sector, this will create unnecessary hardship for claimants attempting to establish and implement attendants to manage their personal care.

OSOT'S RECOMMENDATIONS:

Given our concerns with the new licensing requirements, we are requesting that:

1. Licensing should be restricted to non-regulated personnel who access the HCAI system; and
2. The Ministries of Health & Long Term Care and Finance approach the regulatory colleges to address the colleges' potential roles in addressing fraudulent business practices by its registrants.

If your government continues to support the additional licensing of regulated health professionals, then we request that:

1. FSCO demonstrate how licensing will prevent potentially fraudulent clinics from using the HCAI system;
2. The per-claimant fee be revisited with proper disclosure, consultation and negotiation among all stakeholders including OSOT;
3. FSCO disclose the process by which the fee structure was developed including the business case and the stakeholders that were engaged in the process;
4. FSCO develop an annual report on how the licensing revenue is being used and the impact it is having on reducing and preventing fraudulent billing activity; and

5. Licensing and professional fee negotiations resume after the election of 2014 such that all parties can address reasonable remuneration in this sector in concert with the new licensing requirements.

OSOT'S QUESTIONS:

In order to help support our members, we seek to understand your position on the following:

1. The rationale and need for additional licensing of regulated health care professionals;
2. Your plans to reduce these fees before the implementation date (if your government chooses to proceed with the licensing);
3. The disclosure process for how these funds will be/are spent and FSCO's accountabilities in this regard;
4. The performance indicators by which FSCO and the Ministry of Finance will be measured to determine if the licensing change is effective.

Thank you in advance for taking the time during a particularly busy period in your office. This is an important issue to Occupational Therapists in Ontario. On behalf of our members, I look forward to hearing from you. I may be contacted at thompandsandra@gmail.com. Alternatively, you may contact our Executive Director, Christie Branchley at cbrenchley@osot.on.ca or 416-322-3011, ext. 224.

Sincere regards,



Andrea Thompson MHSc., BSc.(OT), OT Reg.(Ont.)
President, Ontario Society of Occupational Therapists

cc. Hon. Charles Sousa, Minister of Finance (csousa.mpp.co@liberal.ola.org)
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