

December 16th, 2022

RE: Consultation: Portable Benefits Program

On behalf of the [Ontario Society of Occupational Therapists \(OSOT\)](#), we would like to provide our input for the portable benefits program. Participation in this consultation is important to our organization as clients can benefit from access to portable benefits regardless of change or interruption in work.

Occupational Therapists (OTs) are regulated healthcare professionals that work in many settings such as schools, clinics, hospitals, home care, primary care, rehabilitation, and many more. OTs can effectively provide individuals with mental health and physical injury rehabilitation—and with their services covered by the portal benefits program, we can increase clients' access to needed services.

Occupational therapy is currently an OHIP-covered service when prescribed by a doctor. Extended Health Insurance Plans may also offer coverage for occupational therapy. Find out [how occupational therapy can benefit](#) those in precarious work situations such as gig economy and hospitality through preventing injury and illness, recovery, and return/stay at work strategies.

Please see the following recommendations for this consultation.

1. Increasing community access to mental health and rehabilitative services

- a. Accessing these types of service providers would improve the baseline of access to vital health services that our workers need;
- b. Out-of-pocket expenses for occupational therapy, physiotherapy, psychotherapy, social workers, etc. may pose a burden for those who cannot afford it;
- c. Lack of access/affordability to these essential health care services may contribute to a societal decline in health.

2. Increasing overall stability and health of workers

- a. Workers can feel confident and safe knowing that if they sustain an injury, or require mental health treatment, professional services are available;
- b. OTs work with individuals returning to work after injury or illness and OTs support staying at work;
- c. Overall incline in community health services utilization may prevent or divert the use of emergency services.

3. Recognition for occupational therapy services

- a. Occupational therapy is a regulated health care profession that can be overlooked when individuals sustain an injury or require mental health treatment;
- b. Occupational therapy uses holistic and individualized approach to care;
- c. Include occupational therapy input on the recommendations made by the Advisory Panel.

OSOT appreciates the opportunity to participate in this consultation and is open to discussing our recommendations further. Should any questions arise, please reach out to mlofsky@osot.on.ca.

Thank you,



Marnie Lofsky, OT Reg. (Ont.), MA (Leadership) (she/her)
Executive Director
Ontario Society of Occupational Therapists