

Belmont University

## Belmont Digital Repository

---

OTD Capstone Projects

School Of Occupational Therapy

---

Spring 4-4-2022

### Developing Resources to Promote Proficient Telehealth Service Delivery and Increase Knowledge about Making Changes to a State's Practice Act

Cassandra M. Howe  
*OTD Student*, cmhowe16@gmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: <https://repository.belmont.edu/otdcapstoneprojects>



Part of the [Occupational Therapy Commons](#)

---

#### Recommended Citation

Howe, Cassandra M., "Developing Resources to Promote Proficient Telehealth Service Delivery and Increase Knowledge about Making Changes to a State's Practice Act" (2022). *OTD Capstone Projects*. 94. <https://repository.belmont.edu/otdcapstoneprojects/94>

This Poster is brought to you for free and open access by the School Of Occupational Therapy at Belmont Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in OTD Capstone Projects by an authorized administrator of Belmont Digital Repository. For more information, please contact [repository@belmont.edu](mailto:repository@belmont.edu).



# Developing Resources to Promote Proficient Telehealth Service Delivery and Increase Knowledge about Making Changes to a State's Practice Act

Cassandra Howe, OTD/S

Belmont University School of Occupational Therapy,

Expert Mentor Cindy DeRuiter Blackwell OTD, OTR/L, Faculty Mentor Christine Manville EdD, OTR/L

## TNOTA

### Vision

TNOTA is the primary resource, authority, and public voice for the profession of Occupational Therapy in the state of Tennessee.

### Mission

TNOTA strives to advance Occupational Therapy in Tennessee through education, advocacy, communication, and legislative involvement to support the provision of high-quality occupational therapy services and promote the benefits of our profession to consumers, stakeholders, and legislators in Tennessee. To fulfill this mission, TNOTA seeks to:

- Provide professional support to our members and advance the profession through communication, education, and advocacy
- Understand and represent member interests and concern
- Improve the quality of occupational therapy services in TN
- Enhance consumer health and wellbeing through promotion of best practices in occupational therapy in Tennessee
- Represent occupational therapy to the public and promote the benefits of our profession to consumers, stakeholders, and legislators in Tennessee

## Agency Needs

- An online resource that details up-to-date OT telehealth practice guidelines for the state of Tennessee in a user-friendly format that is free of legal jargon
- A directory of resources that provides telehealth practice information regarding; insurance coverage, ethics of practice, setting/population specific resources, and guidance for structuring sessions
- A roadmap document that details the legislative steps to making changes to the OT practice act

## Outcomes

**TENNESSEE TELEHEALTH PRACTICE EXPLAINER**  
Cassandra Howe, OTD/S, Cindy DeRuiter Blackwell OTD, OTR/L  
Most Recent Update: 4/19/2022

**Capstone Project Mission Statement:** The primary objective in creating the Tennessee telehealth practice explainer is to provide OT Practitioners and Students in Tennessee with up to date information and resources related to telehealth practice and coverage. This document serves as a directory of resources for telehealth.

**DEFINITIONS**

- AOTA defines telehealth as the application of evaluative, consultative, preventative, and therapeutic services delivered through information and communication technology
- Synchronous services - services delivered in real-time
- Asynchronous services - services delivered using pre-recorded or "store-and-forward" technology

**TENNESSEE TELEHEALTH LEGISLATIVE UPDATES**

- TNOTA has been hard at work advocating for the passage of a telehealth bill which would make permanent our ability to practice telehealth! Further, this bill would require all insurance plans to cover telehealth services in TN. The bill has passed through both chambers and is awaiting the Governor's signature!
- On the Horizon: If the OT Interstate Compact Act is passed that would mean that Tennessee state licensure would be recognized across all states within the Interstate Compact Act, making service delivery across all platforms, including telehealth, possible.

**TELEHEALTH RESOURCE DIRECTORY**

**AOTA TELEHEALTH RESOURCES**

- [Telehealth practice resources](#) - information on ethics related to telehealth, state-by-state telehealth laws, and information about commercial insurance plans with telehealth coverage
- [Category 3 telehealth codes list](#) - information on CMS' two newest billing codes for telehealth services

**TELEHEALTH RESOURCES FROM STATE OT ASSOCIATIONS**

- [Arizona](#) - telehealth related templates and resources for school OT's
- [Colorado](#) - guide to getting started with telehealth
- [Illinois](#) - Resources for early intervention telehealth service delivery

**FEDERAL TELEHEALTH RESOURCES**

- [Center for Connected Policy Telehealth Resource Page](#)
- [OT Potential Blog-Telehealth Occupational Therapy Guide](#)
- [American Psychological Association-Telehealth Office and Technology Checklist](#)
- [Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Telehealth Resources](#) - including downloadable toolkits
- [United States Department of Health and Human Services-Telehealth Resources for Providers](#)
- [American Telemedicine Association Resources and Practice Guidelines](#)
- [The National Consortium of Telehealth Resource Centers](#)
- [Prime Health](#) - Free virtual telehealth trainings

## Capstone Project Goals

- Review the current Tennessee OT practice act to become familiar with the legal terminology and other documents referenced within it.
- Develop a living document that provides up-to-date information regarding telehealth practice guidelines in the state of Tennessee.
- Create a telehealth resource directory that includes information from; AOTA, state occupational therapy organizations, and federal agencies.

## Acknowledgements

A special thank you to my capstone mentor, Cindy DeRuiter Blackwell OTD, OTR/L for her guidance and support while navigating the legal language of this project. Thank you to my faculty mentor Dr. Christine Manville for providing encouragement and feedback throughout this process. Thank you to all state occupational therapy association presidents and representatives I had contact with who shared their telehealth resources with me while constructing the directory resource. A huge thank you to any all members of the TNOTA executive board that I had contact with while drafting my deliverables. Lastly a special thank you to Courtney Atnip, the TNOTA lobbyist, and her assistant Anna Marie DeJarnette for being my legal subject matter experts when needed.

**A Roadmap for Making Changes to the TN OT Practice Act**  
Cassandra Howe, OTD/S, Cindy DeRuiter Blackwell OTD, OTR/L

- 1 Identify**  
Identify desired changes to be made to the practice act. Formulate what those changes should look like with input from a small group of stakeholders and subject matter experts.
- 2 Consult**  
The group then consults with lobbyists and other legal experts to get input about the desired changes and begins to draft formal language for the changes.
- 3 Sponsors**  
Identify sponsors in the TN house and senate to introduce legislation that would make changes to the practice act. The sponsors then submit the drafted changes which are either accepted or denied. If accepted a bill is then drafted.
- 4 Into the System**  
The submitted bill then goes into the legislative system that can be tracked using the QR code below.
- 5 Advocate**  
TNOTA representatives and lobbyists advocate/lobby the appropriate committees to ensure the passage of the bill.
- 6 Committees**  
The bill travels through relevant committees to be voted on until it reaches the full house and senate floors for a vote.
- 7 The Bill is Passed**  
With successful advocacy and lobbying, the bill passes the house and senate floor by majority vote.
- 8 A Law is Born**  
The Tennessee Governor then signs off on the newly passed legislation officially making it into law.

**A Roadmap for Making Changes to the TN OT Practice Act**  
Cassandra Howe, OTD/S, Cindy DeRuiter Blackwell OTD, OTR/L

- 9 Licensure Board**  
Once the law is signed off on, then the OT Licensure board drafts rules on how to implement this new law. These rules are usually drafted with input from a group of expert OT practitioners in Tennessee.
- 10 The Final Vote**  
The OT Licensure board then reviews those rules and votes on whether to adopt them in an open meeting with OT practitioners and stakeholders present in the audience. A final level of approval is needed before a change can be enacted as a law.
- 11 Official Change**  
Once the final approval of the rules is complete the change is officially adopted into the state's OT practice act!

**FINISH**

**Additional Details**

- This document outlines the steps TNOTA goes through to make changes to the practice act, however, anyone has the authority to move through these same steps to propose/make changes to the practice act should they want to.
- All throughout this process TNOTA representatives and lobbyists are working with stakeholders impacted by the bill.
- These steps take place across a single state legislative session (approximately 4 months). If a bill gets stuck by not reaching a majority vote in one of the committees along the way it may be addressed again in future sessions.

## Resources Available Upon Request

