



South Carolina
Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation



Board of Occupational Therapy

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ADVISORY OPINION¹ ON THE USE OF TELEHEALTH

The South Carolina Board of Occupational Therapy (“Board”) supports the use of telehealth as an effective and comparable method of service delivery that is authorized by the South Carolina Occupational Therapy Practice Act, as set forth in S.C. Code Ann. § 40-36-5, *et seq.* (“Practice Act”). The Board previously issued a Statement Regarding Occupational Therapy Telehealth Services (“Statement”) in response to the onset of the COVID-19 epidemic and the resulting increased use of telehealth as a method of service. In the Statement (as amended on April 24, 2020), the Board noted that it supports the continued provision of Occupational Therapy services by means of telehealth by both licensed Occupational Therapists and licensed Occupational Therapy Assistants (subject to supervision requirements). It also established key points for its licensees to consider when utilizing telehealth, as well as links to additional sources of information on the subject.

The Board offers this Advisory Opinion to make clear to its licensees and the public that the Board supports the continued, permanent use of this method of service delivery beyond the expiration of the Public Health State of Emergency resulting from COVID-19. Telehealth provides access to occupational therapy services for consumers who are at high risk for contracting COVID-19 and expands access to occupational therapy services. The Board recognizes telehealth as a service delivery method that can be utilized as appropriate by occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants (collectively, “occupational therapy practitioners”).

The Board supports telehealth service delivery by occupational therapy practitioners with proven competency and offered within their scope of practice. As with traditional practice, all occupational therapy practitioners utilizing telehealth *must be licensed in the state in which the client receives the services*. The Board expects occupational therapy practitioners utilizing telehealth to be mindful of supervision and other required obligations under the Practice Act and accompanying Regulations, as set forth in S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 94-2, *et seq.*, including the Code of Ethics for Occupational Therapy Personnel, as set forth in S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 94-10.

¹ This Advisory Opinion, as contemplated by S.C. Code Ann. § 1-23-10(4), represents the Board’s current thinking on the topic of telehealth.

As a reminder, the South Carolina Board of Occupational Therapy generally has no jurisdiction over billing, insurance, or employment matters. Each licensee should individually review policies relating to their practice/learning environments established by multiple sources, such as: reimbursement sources; employers; accreditation agencies; and malpractice insurance carriers to identify any additional requirements or concerns, which may be germane to practice and reimbursement.

Finally, the Board encourages its licensees to review the resources included below. These resources are offered as guidance, only. To the extent any of the information contained in these resources conflicts with the requirements of the Practice Act and/or Regulations, the Practice Act and/or Regulations will control.

- **South Carolina Licensure Board:** <https://llr.sc.gov/ot/>
- **South Carolina Department of Health COVID-19 Information:** <https://scdhec.gov/health/infectious-diseases/viruses/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19>
- **AOTA Code of Ethics:** (<https://www.aota.org/ExternalLinks/AJOT-links/Official/ethics/OT-code-of-ethics.aspx>) **and NBCOT Certificant Code of Conduct:** (<https://www.nbcot.org/en/Regulators/Professional-Conduct>)
- **CDC: What Healthcare Providers Should Know Caring for Patients with Confirmed or Possible COVID-19 Infection?** <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/caring-for-patients.html>
- **AOTA Ethics Advisory: Telehealth** <https://www.aota.org/~media/Corporate/Files/Practice/Ethics/Advisory/telehealth-advisory.pdf>
- **AOTA's Telehealth Resource Page:** <https://www.aota.org/Practice/Manage/telehealth.aspx>

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