



CAOT Update

September 2022

Ms. Havelin Anand provided updates on the Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists (CAOT's) advocacy initiatives and priorities for the next year:

- For two years there has been a public awareness campaign targeting federal decision makers for OT's scope of practice in mental health with an emphasis on a digital public campaign
- There is a focus on how to increase the number OTs in Canada by increasing the number of seats available in universities
- A continuum is available on CAOT's website where you can obtain key messages, stories, and economic evidence. This can be retrieved as letters, phone scripts, email scripts and social media
- CAOT and the OT TRC Task Force co-chairs met with Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) in December 2021 to focus on the development of partnerships to support the expansion of OT services within ISC's programs.
- Since January 2022, CAOT has participated in over 20 meetings (Ministers, Parliamentary Secretaries, Shadow Ministers, Critics, Members of Parliament, Prime Ministerial & Ministerial staff).
- As a result of proactive outreach to newly elected MPs pursuant to the September 2021 Federal election, CAOT was invited to appear before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Health (HESA) on March 28th, 2022, to share the perspective of the occupational therapy workforce in Canada. CAOT focused on presenting workforce issues and challenges, including the current lack of supply of OTs to meet the demand for services and the importance of universal access to occupational therapy services.
- CAOT was present at the Canadian Institute for Military and Veterans Research's (CIMVHR) annual conference to showcase the contribution of OTs via services provided to the Canadian Armed Forces and Veteran's Affairs Canada
- CAOT Policy Analyst(s) attend bi-monthly meetings of the Opioid Harm Response Community to present the merits of evidence based, clinically effective, occupational therapy non-pharmacological pain management interventions as one way to tackle the opioid crisis.
- CAOT advocacy efforts have resulted in OTs holding seats in various important Committees and programs: Lesya Dyk was named Chair of the Advisory Council of the National Research Council's Aging in Place Program; Dr. Ben Mortenson as Member of the Technical Committee on LTC Standard; and Marnie Courage is a part of Accessibility Canada's Technical Committee on Outdoor Spaces.



- CAOT continues to be actively engaged in a number of coalitions such as HEAL (Organizations for Health Action – CAOT CEO Hélène Sabourin is Co-Chair); Extended Health Professionals Coalition (EHPC); Canadian Coalition for Public Health in the 21st Century (CCPH21); and the Quality End of Life Care Coalition (QELCCC).
- CAOT met with senior staff of the Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA) in July 2022 to discuss the role and value proposition of occupational therapy in mental health and the importance of recognizing OTs for their full scope of practice.
- CAOT attended various stakeholder engagement sessions hosted by the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences (CAHS) to provide input on their assessment of the current state of Health Human Resources (HHR) in July 2022. The sessions provided the opportunity to highlight and voice the OT workforce needs across Canada.
- In the coming year, we will continue to highlight cost-effective occupational therapy solutions and increase our advocacy efforts to promote the role of occupational therapy on primary care teams in communities across Canada, in mental health, and the importance of occupational therapy coverage in public and private health insurance plans. The team will continue to provide advocacy support to occupational therapists provincially and nationally to participate in sharing and promoting the value of occupational therapy.