



Alaska Occupational Therapy Association

Alaska Occupational Therapy Association

3705 Arctic Blvd

President@AKOTA.org

4/21/2025

Representative Nellie Unangiq Jimmie

Alaska State Legislature

State Capitol

Juneau, AK 99801

Re: Letter of Support for the Occupational Therapy Compact Licensing Bill (HB 173)

Dear Representative Nellie Unangiq Jimmie.,

On behalf of the Alaska Occupational Therapy Association (AKOTA), we write in strong support of the legislation introduced for the Occupational Therapy (OT) Compact (HB 173). This critical bill will modernize licensure portability, reduce administrative barriers, and significantly improve access to occupational therapy services across the state of Alaska.

As you are well aware, many communities in Alaska—especially those in rural and remote areas—face longstanding challenges in accessing consistent, high-quality healthcare. Occupational therapists (OTs) and occupational therapy assistants (OTAs) play an essential role in supporting individuals across the lifespan, from students in schools to seniors in home health and long-term care. However, our ability to meet the needs of these populations is often hindered by workforce shortages and licensing barriers.

Joining the OT Compact will:

- **Expand Access to Care:** The compact will allow licensed occupational therapy professionals in other compact member states to practice in Alaska, helping to alleviate workforce shortages in underserved areas.
- **Support Continuity of Care:** It will enable quicker onboarding of qualified providers in hospitals, outpatient clinics, school systems, and home health agencies—reducing service gaps and wait times for patients.

- **Enhance Emergency Response and Telehealth:** Compact participation allows for more agile deployment of providers during times of crisis and supports the continued growth of telehealth services, which are vital in a geographically large and diverse state like ours.
- **Strengthen Professional Mobility:** The compact provides Alaskan OTs and OTAs with greater career flexibility and employment opportunities across state lines, supporting professional growth and retention.
- **Support Military Families:** Military spouses who are licensed occupational therapy professionals in other compact states will be able to practice in Alaska immediately upon relocation, allowing them to support both their families and local communities without the delays and burdens of re-licensure.

The Alaska Occupational Therapy Association believes that joining the OT Compact is an important step toward improving health outcomes and strengthening our healthcare infrastructure. We thank you for championing this legislation and urge continued bipartisan support for its swift passage.

Please feel free to reach out to us for further information or collaboration.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brianne Oswald, OTD, OTR/L". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the initials "OTD" and "OTR/L" written in a more stylized, abbreviated manner.

Sincerely,

Brianne Oswald, OTD, OTR/L
President | Alaska Occupational Therapy Association
President@AKOTA.org
