



**Arizona Occupational
Therapy Association**

School-Based OT Town Hall

Monday, August 10, 2020, 6:30-8:00 pm

Housekeeping



- The webinar is 90 minutes and will be recorded so that it can be accessed later
- We will start with a presentation of information but most of the time is dedicated to your questions, comments, concerns, and suggestions.
- Participants will be muted but can “raise their hand” to ask a question.
- Participants are also encouraged to type in questions in the Zoom chat box to ArizOTA (host). *We will address these questions at the end of the presentation.*
- ArizOTA does not have any legal authority; all information is presented as guidance and support from experts in their respective fields
- Email office@arizota.org if your question is not addressed during the Town Hall



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THANK YOU TO OUR EXPERTS!



Dina Holdren	Elizabeth Shepherd
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Lisa Rea	Kristi Haak
Alex King	Matthew LeVac
Jenny Clark	
Jennifer Kennedy	
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Kelly Kaiser-Borning	



The Executive Order Authorizing Telehealth

On March 23, Governor Ducey issued an Executive Order

- Expanding telehealth services to all healthcare workforce for the duration of the COVID-19 emergency; and requiring health insurance companies, including AHCCCS to pay for telehealth.
 - See the full order [here](#).
- Arizona Board of Occupational Therapy Examiners is the state OT licensing board. See their [website](#) for interpretation of the executive order.

Medical vs. School-Based Interests

- The wording of the Executive Order leans toward the interests of medical model OT practitioners. What about school-based therapists? Will clarification be provided by the Governor's office?
 - This issue would ideally be addressed by ABOTE in a non-pandemic period. However, all new legislation to enable telehealth by OT was stalled due to the pandemic.
 - The EO is a bandaid to authorize OTs to provide telehealth services during this public health emergency. The Governor has so much on his plate to consider in the intervening months, it is unlikely that he will revise the EO to clarify the directive.
 - There will be minimal enforcement action on this front. So, OTPs can interpret the rules to the best of our ability during the pandemic without much risk of sanctions against our licenses.
 - ArizOTA can only assist with helping OTs navigate this uncertainty using ethical guidelines and resources from AOTA to provide the best level of services to children in the educational system.



What happens after the EO expires?

- ArizOTA will continue to lobby for the passage of new legislation amending ARS 36-3601 to authorize OTs/OTAs as telehealth providers AND to gain mandated parity in reimbursement. There is a possibility of a bridge Executive Order between the pandemic and legislation enactment.
 - If the bill is signed into law, ABOTE will create regulations defining certain requirements for telehealth and they will be equipped to help OTs and ArizOTA answer such questions as how telehealth/teletherapy should be implemented in the educational setting.
 - We are aware teletherapy has been provided for students in charter schools for years by practitioners not residing in AZ, as well as those residing in AZ. This is part of the Legislative Committee's ongoing discussion surrounding the revision of the AZ OT practice act.

Regulatory Compliance

HHS Office for Civil Rights Notification of Enforcement discretion for telehealth

- Press release linked [here](#)
- Goal is to promote telehealth to reduce the risk of transmission and continue health care services
 - Office of Civil Rights will not impose penalties for non compliance with telehealth services during the COVID-19 crisis.

FERPA Compliance for Teletherapy

- Utilize district-authorized platforms that are compliant with FERPA and other education laws
 - Enable password if possible
- The therapist should be in a private location to avoid unauthorized disclosure of student PII
- Do not share student PII during group sessions; do not publicly display the student's information during the session or after the session

Legal Issues & Telehealth

- Licensure
 - License required in the state where patient/student is located; the clinician can be physically located anywhere in the U.S.
 - Cannot provide services in an OT capacity (even supportive or non-billable) to a student not physically located in the state where the clinician is licensed
 - AOTA is working on an [interstate licensure law](#) to hopefully go into effect by 2024
- OTA Supervision
 - ABOTE will not interpret the practice act, but the consensus among OT practitioners is that OTA supervision is satisfied through virtual means (FaceTime, Skype, etc.) but must be real-time
 - ABOTE is aware of the lack of clear direction in the practice act and will consider this for next revision

Legal Issues & Telehealth (continued)

- What if a student gets hurt while participating in telehealth with parent support?
 - The parent's homeowner's or renter's insurance would cover injuries of the child in the home.
 - Most business insurance policies do not cover students who are not on the property of the school.
 - If the therapist is liable for the injury due to the directions provided during the sessions, the therapist's malpractice insurance would cover the incident. If you are employed by the school the school should check its policy. If you are self-employed, call your insurance carrier to confirm coverage of malpractice for telehealth services.

Informed Consent

- District-specific policies for virtual learning/teletherapy
 - Up to districts to gain signatures from parent/guardian to implement virtual learning and teletherapy, including groups
- Informed consent
 - There may already be sufficient language in the student's IEP
 - Include in the IEP service page that the services may be provided via webcam
 - Use e-signature (DocuSign, IEP Pro)
 - Confidentiality/informed consent previously signed may be sufficient
 - SAMPLE of informed consent form that can be customized to school setting
[https://www.arizona.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Telehealth-Patient-Consent-Form.d
ocx](https://www.arizona.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Telehealth-Patient-Consent-Form.docx)
 - Can gain informed consent from parent/guardian one time (not needed every session)



Telehealth Consent Form

- Points to Include:
 - Parent understands that student services may be conducted in group
 - Parent/guardian understands that they need to be present during therapy
 - Indication that the parent/guardian has access to computer with internet, camera, audio with microphone for child to use
 - Indication that parent/guardian, or adult student has read, understands, and gives permission for the student to participate in telehealth/teletherapy/virtual therapy (district decision)
 - Parent/guardian/adult, student signature & date



Additional Teletherapy Information to Include

- Information to include:
 - Explanation as to why teletherapy is being offered
 - The type of services being offered. Should be the same for OT, PT, SLP, etc.
 - Explanation of what the teletherapy looks like
 - Why the parent should be present
 - The items needed for students to participate in therapy
 - Contact information
 - How therapy will be scheduled

Teletherapy in Schools

- Is teletherapy consultative or direct?
 - Teletherapy can be considered direct. Districts have the right to interpret how OT services are provided through IDEA 04.
- IEP
 - Always collaborate with the IEP team to address student's needs
 - IEP minutes can be met through observation, troubleshooting, collaboration with parent
 - Consulting may be considered IEP minutes- This too is a district decision to allow or not
 - AT and other support needs may change with virtual learning. Districts may differ on what supports they will provide due to their interpretation of IDEA 04

Teletherapy in Schools (continued)

- What is billable?
 - Working directly with student via virtual platform
 - Parent/guardian/caregiver coaching and education (as long as student is present and involved as much as possible)
 - Educationally relevant treatments
 - If the resource teacher is acting as your e-Helper and you are providing a teletherapy session with the student, then that is direct service and medicaid billable time.
 - If the resource teacher is working with the student and you are observing and providing feedback to the resource teacher on accommodations, that is indirect service and not medicaid billable. You can count that as consultation IEP minutes, however.

Teletherapy in Schools (continued)

- Parent/guardian support
 - Build rapport with parent/guardian and emphasize their role in their student's success
 - Check with district standards as typically parents cannot "pick and choose" special education services. If there is an identified need, consider a consultative model to support the special education identification rather than a direct therapy model.
 - If parent/guardian opts not to participate, document that in IEP; document interactions with parent/guardian in notes
 - Provide clear expectations of parent/caregiver, including that they are present and supervising student during entire session
- Groups
 - Must have parent/guardian consent; may need additional consent for other children's parents to be present. This should be explicit in the consent form.
 - No cap on group size; this is a district/caseload issue- therapist should rely on ethical decision making as well as district guidelines.
 - Don't share PII during group sessions

Reimbursement

- School district specific based on decision to enroll in MIPS
- [AHCCCS statement](#) (updated 5/6/20)
 - Question: Can LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCIES (LEAs) receive reimbursement for Medicaid-covered medical services provided to eligible students through telehealth and telephonic means during school closures due to COVID-19?
 - Answer: AHCCCS, working in conjunction with the Arizona Department of Education and Public Consulting Group (AHCCCS' third party administrator for the Medicaid School Based Claiming program), have updated their systems to allow LEAs to bill for telehealth services for the Medicaid in Schools program for Dates of Service (DOS) March 30, 2020 and later.
- School OT services must be educationally relevant to be reimbursable
- School-based services can still be provided while student is receiving medical OT services. These are different reimbursement sources

Assessments

- Can use any assessment. Some may not be appropriate unless sent home to parent/guardian and then scanned/sent back
 - SPM & SPM-P are available online for a fee. Sensory Profile (short) available as well.
 - Mail Beery-VMI and document conducted in non-standardized format
 - Give instructions through phone/video. Caregiver should take photos of all pages in addition to mailing the physical worksheet back to the evaluating therapist.
- For hands-on assessments, utilize parent/guardian/helper as much as possible. Focus on the impact on occupations rather than specific objective measures of tone, range of motion, etc.
- Clinical observations through video; be sure camera is capturing what you are observing (e.g. posture, LE position, chair/table height)
- Use phone as a document camera

Goals & Outcomes

- Goals
 - Start slowly with attainable short term goals to build student and parent/guardian confidence and increase follow through
 - This is a unique opportunity to investigate family goals
 - Be mindful of how you will measure outcomes associated with your goals
 - Be mindful of levels of assistance and how you will measure them virtually (use parent/guardian feedback)
 - This is a new setting. Students may have different challenges from the classroom environment
- Outcomes
 - Have parents take photos/scan and send work samples
 - Request samples from teacher(s)
 - Join live, teacher-led classroom sessions to observe
 - Gather feedback from parent/guardian

Treatment

- Sensory & Behavior Considerations
 - Teletherapy does not have to be a seated task! Consider a standing area and sensory supports as you would in a regular classroom environment.
 - Have the student start with a sensory task, which may include a short YouTube video, yoga/stretch sequence, etc.
 - Environmental modifications
 - Engage/collaborate with your district's behavioral analyst
 - Attempt to provide teletherapy; document if unable due to behaviors
- Motor Considerations
 - Caregiver coaching; building relationships and confidence with caregiver
 - External environmental modifications
 - Can coordinate with home health OT; written consent required
 - AT coaching and practice
 - Modeling and demonstration



In-Person School Considerations

- [AOTA Back-to-School Guide](#)
 - Written for parents, guardians, caregivers, administrators, teachers, para-professionals, and students
 - Included guidelines for cleaning equipment, classroom setup, masks, mental/behavior health and well-being, transitions, and much more

Assistive Technology & Supports

- Sign out AT and other equipment from within district
- If it is something the student previously had at the school, the school should be providing that for the student.
- Consider arranging a limited contact pick up with the school.
- Remember that the setting may require different AT supports
- Assistive technology training and loans for therapists:
 - [Arizona Department of Education AZTech](#)
 - [NAU Institute for Human Development AzTAP](#)
 - [Arizona Department of Education AT Short Term Loan Library](#)
 - [Southwest Human Development ADAPT](#)



Education Empowerment Scholarship

- Parents of children who have an IEP can opt out from receiving school based and special education services.
- The Empower Scholarship enables parents to pay providers for their services to their child, who formerly received special education, while receiving reimbursement from the Arizona Department of Education.
- The decision to utilize OT services is at the discretion of the parent. In this situation, the OT functions like a vendor and does not need prior approval from the Department of Ed, to provide their service. These services can be provided through a private company or by an independent contractor.
- OTs evaluating ESA students will need to obtain a separate informed consent for teletherapy and will bill the parents directly.

Graduation & Postsecondary Transition

- The Postsecondary arena includes employment, education/training, and independent living
- The IDEA 04 includes a transition plan that must be implemented by age 16, and updated annually
- Occupational Therapy's role in transition planning includes:
- Transition IEP contributions:
 - Transition assessments
 - Transition goals
 - Transition services
- Work readiness
- Functional Capacity
- Employability skills
- CBI community based integration
- ADL & IADL
- Occupational performance and interests

Graduation & Postsecondary Transition

- Occupational Therapy Transition planning supports:
 - ArizOTA Postsecondary Transition Specialty Interest Section:
 - <https://www.arizota.org/2019/03/25/postsecondary-transition-special-interest-section/>
 - Arizona Transition Community of Practice on Transition:
 - <https://sites.google.com/view/azcopt/home>
 - American Occupational Therapy position on transition:
 - <https://www.aota.org/Practice/Children-Youth/Transitions/Resources.aspx>
 - Arizona Department of Education transition supports:
 - <https://www.azed.gov/specialeducation/transition/>
 - Free Transition Training for Providers and teachers from the Transition Coalition:
 - <https://transitioncoalition.org/>



Helpful links from AOTA

- [AOTA Back to School Guide](#)
- [AOTA School-Based and EI Decision Guide](#)
- [AOTA Telehealth Decision Guide](#)
- [From Onsite to Online: Addressing Students' Needs Through a Telehealth Service Delivery Model](#) (FREE webinar)
- [Shortening the Distance: A Panel Discussion on Telehealth and Occupational Therapy with Children, Youth, and Adults](#) (FREE webinar)
- [School-Based Medicaid: What We're Learning about Reimbursement for Non-IEP Services](#) (\$20 AOTA member/\$25 non-AOTA member)
- [CommunOT](#): Central location for OT practitioners, educators, and students to ask questions and share ideas and resources with each other. Must be AOTA member to access.

Other Resources

- [Telehealth in School-Based Practice: Balancing Opportunity and Ethical Considerations](#): Melanie Criss, OTD, OTR/L, Contributing Presenter: Jana Cason, DHSc, OTR/L, FAOTA (slides)
- [TelehealthShare YouTube channel](#)
 - [Telehealth OT Evaluation for School Aged Children](#) (YouTube Video)
- [ArizOTA Telehealth Resources](#)
 - We will put this webinar recording and slides on our website and will add more resources in the coming days



Questions & Answers

What other questions do you have?

If we do not have an opportunity to address your question tonight, please email your question to office@arizona.org OR pose the question in the [AZ Occupational Therapy Network](#) Facebook Group



Let's Stay Connected

- Facebook Group: [AZ Occupational Therapy Network](#)
 - Ask questions, share ideas, and discuss topics of interest with your fellow AZ OT practitioners, students, and educators
- Text **ArizOTA** to 27000 to sign up for text message updates
- [Join or renew your membership!](#) Enter code **TWNHLL042** for \$5 off annual membership. Offer expires 9/30/2020.



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