

# NMOTA

New Mexico Occupational Therapy Association

## THE REACHER

FALL/WINTER NEWSLETTER 2022

### OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY DAY AT THE LEGISLATURE

**Coming February 15,  
2023 at the New  
Mexico State  
Capitol**



<https://www.sos.state.nm.us/about-new-mexico/state-capitol/>

- **Promote the value of Occupational Therapy**
- **Learn how the Legislative process can support our work**
- **Save the date and join us!**

Image: Save the Date. 2/15/2022 OT Day at the Legislature

## This issue:

Executive Corner

PAGE 02

2022 Conference Success

PAGE 04

Nominating Results

PAGE 05

Membership and  
Communications Reports

PAGE 06

Practice Areas Interview

PAGE 07

Legislative Matters

PAGE 08

Treasurer's Account

PAGE 10

Changes to OT  
Rules & Laws

PAGE 11

## Executive Corner

AUTHOR: VANESSA STROMAN AND MARY THELANDER HILL

2023 will be a time of transitions in leadership for the NMOTA Executive Board. The results of the August 2022 Executive Board election will be described in the report from the nominating committee later in this newsletter. Here, we would like to talk about how a smooth transition of leadership will be accomplished to support our membership and mission: to articulate the distinct value of occupational therapy in achieving and maintaining quality of life through occupations that promote recovery, rehabilitation, and health.

Robert Hobbs has been the NMOTA President since September 2018. Prior to that, Robert served 2 years as the Association Vice President. We appreciate his leadership and advocacy for occupational therapy here in New Mexico. As a business owner, he has contributed his keen eye when reviewing contracts. He has offered a friendly leadership style for board meetings and interactions. Robert will pass the torch to Dara Sanders-Aceves as she was nominated and accepted the position at the NMOTA Annual Business Meeting. She is a COTA from Roswell, NM, who has been practicing for over 11 years and is an educator at Eastern New Mexico University-Roswell. She looks forward to being the NMOTA President and making a positive impact.



Image: Outgoing President Robert Hobbs (left) and Elected President Dara Sanders-Aceves (right)



Image: Outgoing Vice President Joanna Cosbey

The NMOTA Board also wishes to acknowledge the contributions of Joanna Cosbey. Since 2019, Joanna has served as the Association's Vice President. One of her first initiatives was to modernize the Association's document storage in Google drive so that board members living in different corners of New Mexico could communicate and collaborate over a great distance. This proved invaluable during the first two years of the COVID Pandemic and has resulted in an orderly pass-down of information and duties for the members of the NMOTA Board. Joanna's organizational and leadership skills have bolstered the efforts of the Brews and CEUs conference in 2020, the virtual NMOTA Annual Conference in 2021, and our return to a live annual conference in 2022, in which Joanna was the Plenary speaker. Joanna has notified the Association that she will need to step down from the Board. The Executive Board will be actively recruiting an OT or OTA to train with her so that there can be as much pass down as possible for the duties of the Vice President for the person who is able to step into the role.

## Executive Corner Continued

Mary Thelander Hill has been the Treasurer since September 2018. Mary has served on the Executive Board since 2017, as the Secretary of the Association for one year prior to becoming Treasurer. In her time as Treasurer, Mary has automated the bookkeeping, streamlined payment systems, and ensured accurate and timely filing of NMOTA taxes. Prior to that time, Mary was a member of the Conference committee as the chair of the silent auction for five years and helped raise more than \$10,000 for the AOTF Occupational Therapy Scholarship Fund (with the generous donations of NMOTA OTs and OTAs and community businesses). Mary also supervised OT students in advocacy and service learning projects with the Association. After two terms as Treasurer, Mary is term-limited, but will be a resource to the newly elected Treasurer.



Image: Outgoing Treasurer  
Mary Thelander Hill

Melissa Tencza was elected to the Treasurer position in August 2022, and will take office in January 2023. Also a graduate from UNM, Melissa has experience in adult home health and school-based settings and is detail oriented and thorough. In order to ensure an orderly and effective transition of accounts from Mary to Melissa, the two are collaborating on numerous training sessions. The position of NMOTA Treasurer has been held by Sybil Regalado and by Prisca Werbelow in the past and all past Treasurers have been generous in providing training that supports the Association and its members. Mary and Melissa will keep that tradition strong.



Image: Elected Treasurer, Melissa Tencza



Image: NMOTA 2022 Conference Co-chairs  
Alondra Jimenez (left) and Shyla Ervin (right)

The NMOTA Executive Board would like to highlight the efforts of Alondra Jimenez, Shyla Ervin and Robin Leinwand for organizing the NMOTA Conference held in Albuquerque, NM in August 2022. Returning the NMOTA conference to an in-person event involved careful planning and execution, and it was a resounding success! As conference Co-Chairs, Alondra and Shyla coordinated CEU presentations, audio visual needs, catering, and conference space. We are lucky to have you both and look forward to next year's conference!

Not pictured is Robin Leinwand, whose management of the conference event online system in 2021 and 2022 has been a behind-the-scenes integral contribution to mission of the Association. Robin - we thank you for your work and dedication to successful NMOTA continuing education offerings.



## Conference Committee

AUTHOR: ALONDRA JIMENEZ AND SHYLA ERVIN

The Conference Committee would like to thank everyone who attended the NMOTA 2022 Conference this year. We appreciate all your support and feedback as this was a year of learning. NMOTA values your time and willingness to attend the conference and to share your knowledge.

The 2023 conference was an outstanding return to an in-person celebration of our distinct value. We offered 13.5 CEUs for OTs and OTAs in subjects including: Sleep and the Refugee Experience by Heidi Sanders, MA, OTR/L; Plenary Session: Occupational Performance: What Are We Really Doing by Joanna Cosbey, PhD, OTR/L; AOTF: Advancing the Science of Occupational Therapy, Building Evidence for Practice by Janet Poole, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA; Sensory Interventions for Treating Children with PTSD by Crystal White, OTS; Understanding Service Delivery Decisions: The Switch to Telehealth Due to COVID-19 by Timothy Dionne, PhD, OTR/L; 2022 Updates to the Rules for Practice of Occupational Therapy in the State of New Mexico by Sarah Porte, MOT, OT/L and Life Balance by Shyla Ervin, COTA/L and Alondra Jimenez, COTA/L.

In addition to the informative plenary and session presenters at the conference, we are honored that Diane Parham, OTR/L, FAOTA, Professor at the UNM Occupational Therapy Graduate Program and specialist in Sensory Integration, Development of Clinical Assessments, and Infant and Child Development was the keynote speaker. Dr. Parham shared her knowledge about the sociocultural, neurobiological, and cognitive aspects of play across the lifespan as well as the occupational value of leisure for adults.



Image: Diane Parham, OTR/L, FAOTA

The NMOTA annual conference is always an incredible opportunity to connect with our community while refreshing our practice with new ideas. We are excited to have gained two new team members, Omar Aubert and Breanna Gass, to help us in planning NMOTA 2023. We look forward to using your feedback on possible venue locations and bringing back the silent auction. If you are interested in serving on the conference committee or chairing the silent auction, please contact us.

Thank you for your continued support, for attending the amazing conference in 2022 and for thinking of ways to share your knowledge and efforts at the 2023 NMOTA conference

-Conference Committee  
[conference@nmota.org](mailto:conference@nmota.org)



Image: Shyla Ervin (left) and Alondra Jimenez (right)

## Nominating Chair

AUTHOR: SARAH SUTHERLIN

This year's NMOTA election closed August 19, 2022. Consistent with our bylaws, NMOTA members voted via e-mail and voting was conducted electronically. Open positions for this election were President and Treasurer, position term will be January 1, 2023 through December 31, 2024.

Melissa Tencza was the only candidate for Treasurer at the time of the election. 21 eligible members voted for Melissa for treasurer, that's 11% of total NMOTA membership. No members voted against Melissa's candidacy. Welcome Melissa!

No candidate was nominated for the position of President at the time of the election. During the business meeting of the NMOTA Annual Conference, Dara Sanders-Aceves was nominated for President and accepted the nomination. All who were present at the business meeting indicated that they were in favor, no one opposed, no one abstained. Welcome Dara!

NMOTA's Continuing Education Committee Chair is vacant and we would love for you to join the board. Co-Chair positions for Membership and Social Media Committees are also vacant. If you have a few hours a month to support our state's professional organization, please contact [nominating@nmota.org](mailto:nominating@nmota.org). In September of 2023, NMOTA will hold an election for Vice President and Secretary, please consider nominating yourself or a colleague.

Service on the NMOTA Board allows you to shape the activities of the Association and meet OTs and OTAs throughout our state. Please consider volunteering as a committee member, committee chair, or as an Executive Board Officer!



Image: Sarah Sutherlin

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The Western Regional OT Spring Symposium (WROTSS) is a premier continuing education conference offering an opportunity for OT practitioners from 8 western states to learn, grow, network, and celebrate! Mark your calendars! If you are interested in volunteering at this conference, please contact [nominating@nmota.org](mailto:nominating@nmota.org)



Image: <https://www.facebook.com/WROTSS/>





Image: Rachel Wainwright

## Communication and Social Media Chair

AUTHOR: RACHEL WAINWRIGHT

I am a second year graduate student at the UNM Occupational Therapy Graduate Program. I gladly accepted the position as Communications Chair for the NMOTA in June this year due to this position helping me with a project in my Advocacy, Communication, and Leadership class. The project focuses on promoting and communicating the value of Occupational Therapy. The Communications Chair advocates and shares information about the activities of the New Mexico Occupational Therapy Association.

A couple months ago, a survey was sent out regarding if another form of social media would be beneficial to our members. After reviewing responses, it was determined that Instagram would be another useful addition to our Association and will be created shortly. Look for the update on our Instagram platform via Facebook or email.

Currently, we are looking for someone to join the Communications Committee to help manage the NMOTA website. We currently use the Wix platform, but could change platforms to suit the needs of the volunteer. If this rewarding volunteer position will be beneficial to you, please reach out at [communications@nmota.org](mailto:communications@nmota.org)

## Membership Chair

AUTHOR: SUE SHELLEY

Thank you for being part of the New Mexico Occupational Therapy Association. NMOTA relies on member participation to support our mission to educate, raise public awareness, and promote the distinct value of occupational therapy in achieving and maintaining quality of life through occupations that promote recovery, rehabilitation, and health.

The benefits of membership

(<https://www.nmota.org/benefits>):

- Engagement: NMOTA is the only membership association for OT in NM. NMOTA assists in networking friends, professional opportunities, and validations and affirmation for the distinct professional role you play in your facility, organization, or agency.
- Representation: NMOTA is vital in protecting the practice of OT in NM. We lobby, testify, present, and advocate for the value of OT in habilitations and rehabilitation of people to want to return to valued occupations
- Awareness: We are educating, raising public awareness, and promoting occupational therapy in the media, news, and select online social forums. Blog, discuss, submit an event, or showcase organization or service.
- Leadership: NMOTA is an all volunteer organization led by OTs, OTAs, and OT students, dedicated to a job well done of operating a membership association.

To keep your membership current, go to:

<https://www.nmota.org/membership>

As of October 1, 2022, we have 210 active members. Thanks again to all of our members!



Image: Sue Shelley



## Practice Areas Interview

AUTHOR: KAREN MESTAS-HARRIS AND DENISE FAJARDO

The following is an interview from Denise Fajardo, a School-Based Occupational Therapist in Silver City, NM. She discusses Board Certification in Pediatrics (through AOTA's Advanced Certification Program) and what the process entails to obtain this certification.

What does BCP stand for?

- BCP stands for "Board Certified in Pediatrics".

Tell me about why you wanted to get the certification?

- I wanted to get board certified because I thought it would give me additional knowledge so I could provide more effective "evidence-based" Occupational Therapy interventions. Getting board certified also provides the therapist with a validation of skills/experience to enhance their ability to be heard or to advocate for the profession and clients. I was hoping the BCP would give my employer or future employer confidence in hiring me or giving me additional responsibilities to be an effective team member.

Is the certification through AOTA or NBCOT?

- The certification is through AOTA and the OT may need to be a member of AOTA. The website with details is listed here: <https://www.aota.org/career/advanced-certification-program>

What was the process?

- The process for me may be slightly different than now as I was one of the first cohorts to take the exam. For example, I took my exam in June, but did not get results until the following October because the team developing the exam/program had to gather the data from the exam. I also took a prep course that lasted for 6 months consisting of intensive online discussions and downloads/information.

The requirements for the Advanced Certification Exam are:

Be certified or licensed by, and in good standing, with an AOTA-recognized credentialing or regulatory body.

1. Have a minimum of 3 years experience as an OT
2. Have a minimum of 3000 hours of experience in the certification area within the last 5 years.
3. A minimum of 500 hours delivering OT services to clients in the certification areas within the last 5 years (this is to distinguish actual service time versus administration, etc in the certification area)
4. Verification of years of experience as an OT as well as years of experience within the practice area is required.
5. The steps to getting certified are:
  - a. Apply/submit application & await the review and approval of your application
  - b. Exam eligibility: You have 90 days from the approval of your application to schedule and take the exam.
  - c. The certification begins the day you pass the exam and lasts for 5 years.
  - d. You are required to earn at least 60 contact hours of professional development and maintain at least 1500 hours of experience in the certification area within your 5-year certification cycle.



# Practice Areas Continued

AUTHOR: KAREN MESTAS-HARRIS AND DENISE FAJARDO

How do you think it will impact your practice?

- I had hoped the certification would give my employers the confidence they needed to allow me to take on more responsibilities, as well as playing a role with the current transition planning program at the high school, as well as updating the preschool/DD program to be based on best-practice and evidence-based approaches to therapy.

What challenges do you face in your practice? You are School-Based with Silver City Schools?

- I am school-based in Silver City, New Mexico. The challenges I face at my current practice location are numerous at this time, mostly due to post COVID restrictions.
- At this time my certification has had no impact on this job placement; however, I only recently achieved this certification (October 2021) and so I am hoping that my certification will open doors for me whether here in Silver City or elsewhere. This is a National certification and so I am hoping it will show that I have advanced skills in this practice area no matter where I am located.

If you are interested in further information about the benefits of board certification in pediatrics, check the AOTA Website at <https://www.aota.org/career/advanced-certification-program>

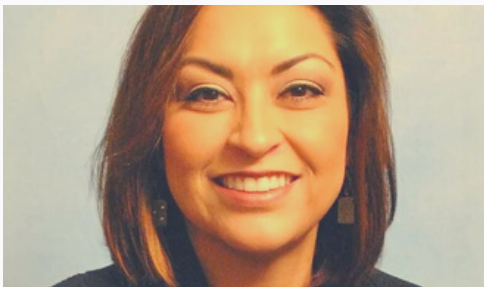


Image: Karen Mestas-Harris (left) and Denise Fajardo (right)

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# Legislative Matters

AUTHOR: JASON DUNLAP

This year our committee has been keeping an eye on legislative matters concerning our profession here in New Mexico. You may have heard of the Occupational Therapy Interstate Compact these last couple of years. This is a compact to allow OT's and OTA's to practice across state lines and to not have to hold an individual state license within each state in which they work. So far, 20 states have signed into their legislation the Occupational Therapy Interstate Compact. New Mexico has not yet passed legislation to join the Interstate Compact.

The mission of the New Mexico Occupational Therapy Association is to articulate the distinct value of occupational therapy in achieving and maintaining quality of life through occupations that promote recovery, rehabilitation, and health.



# Legislative Matters Continued

AUTHOR: JASON DUNLAP

This year our committee has been involved in a few meetings concerning a possible proposal to our legislators here in New Mexico. We have met with the American Occupational Therapy Association, the National Board of Certification for Occupational Therapy, and here within New Mexico, state level stakeholders to see if this is the year that we will try. The last meeting that our committee participated in was this past September, when other stakeholders such as the New Mexico Physical Therapy Association and the New Mexico Psychologists Association (they are both pursuing to pass their own interstate compacts) met to learn about each profession's circumstances regarding New Mexico as another "compact privilege" state. At that meeting, Linda Seigle, who serves as our lobbyist, had valuable insight. To share, it has been on the recommendation of the AOTA and NBCOT to not pursue our OT interstate compact. The past meeting that we attended - it was the consensus to not pursue our individual compacts as well. Why?

For a bill to be voted on, there is a "gatekeeper" within our state legislative process known as the Senate Judicial Committee. The current members of Senate Judicial Committee are very concerned with passing professional interstate compacts in general, such as our OT interstate Compact. The last interstate compact to be heard by the Senate Judicial Committee was the Physical Therapy Interstate Compact in 2021. It was first heard by the Senate Judicial Committee and was not passed on to have a vote in the Senate or House of Representatives. One example of why it was not passed is the concern of losing state sovereignty regarding licensure. The legislators that served on that committee in 2021 are projected to continue to serve here in 2023. Our state association has been advised to wait until the political climate changes and to direct our endeavors elsewhere. Unless there is a big change in the next couple of months, the New Mexico Occupational Therapy Association will be on standby concerning our progress with the Occupational Therapy Interstate Compact. The additional time will also allow opportunities to discover how joining the compact has affected the states who have been early adopters.



Image: Jason Dunlap

What is next? This year we plan to hold another Legislative Day at the State Capitol. The past two years we have held an online zoom venue and that has been successful. We look forward to an in-person event for practitioners and students of Occupational Therapy to be present at our state capitol of government to educate and advocate.

Legislative Day is confirmed for February 15th. Our theme this year is "Occupational Therapy Day at the Legislature" so that we can increase awareness of the distinct value of Occupational Therapy to our lawmakers. So... our mission on February 15th 2023: to share our passion for Occupational Therapy, why we are important in our community as a profession and that we do help increase the quality of life of each human that requires our unique skill. The occupation of life is sacred...we are the best advocates for OT.

## Treasurer's Account

AUTHOR: MARY THELANDER HILL

The past several years have been difficult on all financials for the Association, but due to conservative financial practices by the NMOTA board for the past decades, we have had a sufficient nest egg to weather the storms of the pandemic years and the post-pandemic costs.

The chart below depicts the financial state of NMOTA at the end of the fiscal year from June 2019 through August 2022. NMOTA does not carry any debt (in credit card or other forms). In August 2022, NMOTA had \$67,816.42 in savings and \$57,304.43 in checking. The major expenses of the conference have not yet been deducted from the August balance.

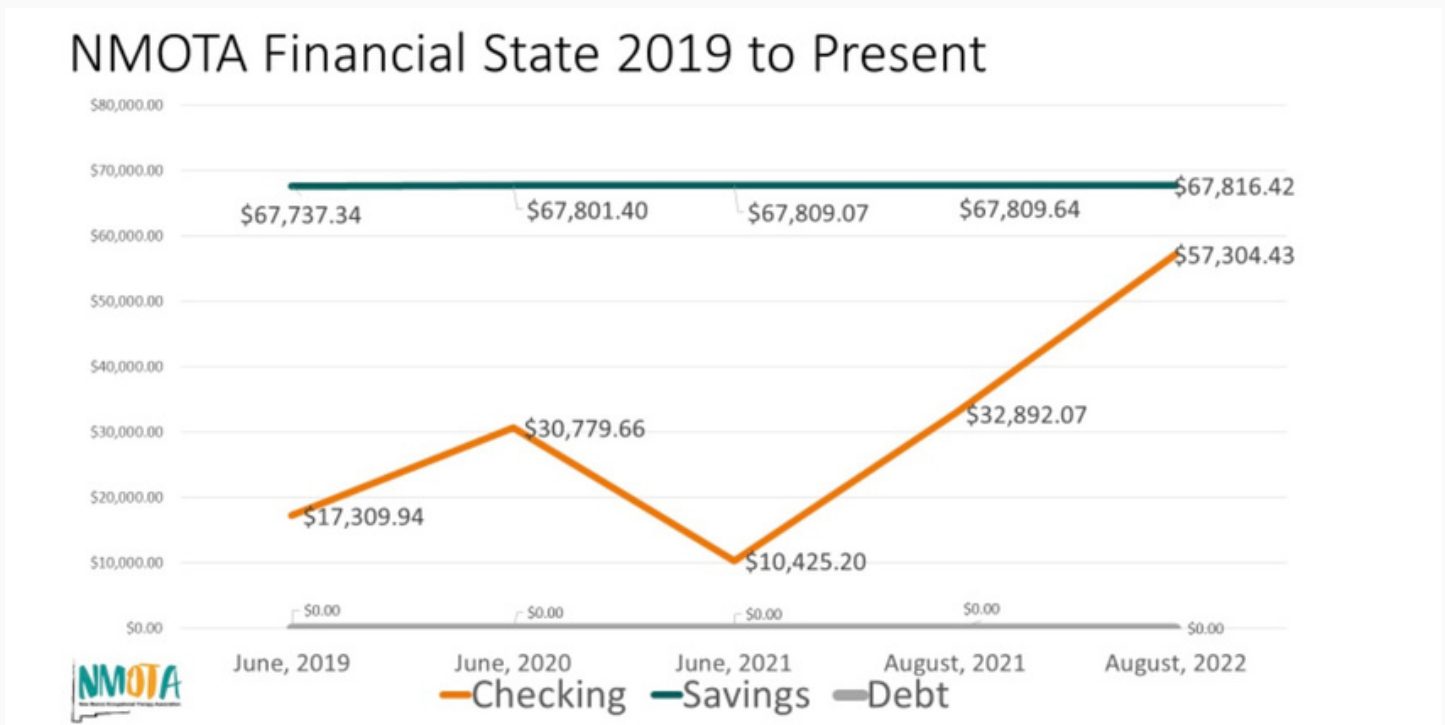


Image: Chart depicting NMOTA bank balances from 2019 to 2022. In August, 2022, the association held \$32,892.07 in checking, \$67,816.42 in savings, and does not hold any debt or credit card balances.

In the next fiscal year the following income and major expenses have been budgeted:

#### Major Income:

Membership: \$9,843.23  
Conference: \$37,000  
Total: \$46,843.23

#### Major Expenses:

Conference Venue/Catering: \$24,000  
Conference Audio/Visual: \$9,361.93  
Legislative Lobbyist: \$12,000  
Insurance: \$1,929.00  
Webhost/Software: \$2,426.69  
Total Major Expenses: \$49,717.62



# State-Level Changes to the Rules and Laws for Occupational Therapy

AUTHOR: MARY THELANDER HILL

It is the responsibility of every Occupational Therapist (OT) and Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA) to stay up-to-date on the rules and laws of Occupational Therapy. Those rules and laws are updated by the New Mexico Regulation and Licensing Department (NM RLD). The NM RLD maintains a state-level board to advise on the changes of rules and regulations for occupational therapy.

Acknowledgements: This article was heavily influenced by an informative and timely presentation by Sarah Porte, MOT, OT/L at the 2022 NMOTA Annual Conference. Sarah has served the occupational therapy profession in many ways (including past leadership on the NMOTA Board) and currently serves on the New Mexico Rules and Laws - Occupational Therapy Board by appointment of the Governor. Thank you Sarah for your leadership to our profession!

The Rules and Laws were updated on 2/15/2022 by the NM RLD Board. There are numerous changes about which the OT community should be aware. This article will list some of the larger changes related to CEUs and supervision. However - every OT and OTA should read through the document to stay current with the rules and regulations in NM. The link to the updated rules and laws is at the end of this article. Here is a list of specific updates that may be of interest to NMOTA membership.

## Occupational Therapy and Occupational Therapy Licensing Updates:

- The specific list of criminal offenses that may result in a license being denied or suspended (16.15.2.9)
- The procedure and expectations for expedited licensure for military service members, spouses and veterans (16.15.2.19)

## Supervision Updates:

- A specific list of support services that may be completed by therapy techs is delineated - tasks such as cleaning equipment, assisting in patient transport, clerical activities.... (16.15.3.7-I).
  - Specific language from Item B in standard is added (16.15.3.8-B): “Non-licensed personnel do not provide skilled occupational therapy services.”
- The number of OTAs that an OT may supervise is indicated (16.15.3.8-A-5, 6)
  - First-year OTs are limited to supervising three or fewer OTAs.
  - OTs with more than one year of experience must determine the number of OTAs that can be appropriately supervised depending on: “...the experience of the occupational therapy assistant, complexity of the patient or client needs and the setting of care.”



# State-Level Changes to the Rules and Laws for Occupational Therapy

AUTHOR: MARY THELANDER HILL

## Continuing Education Requirement Updates:

- Fifteen Continuing Education Contact (CEUs) hours are required each year (16.15.4.8).
- The full list of ways to earn CEUs is important for all OTs and OTAs to know (16.15.4.9). Specific changes are listed below - but reviewing the full list in the standard may help OTs and OTAs strategically consider which ways will provide the most benefit to their practices.
  - Changes to the limits to some types of CEUs are updated:
    - There is no limit to the number of books that may be used to acquire CEUs (provide a name of the book, number of pages and how the book relates to your OT practice area). Two CEUs may be obtained for each book.
    - There is no limit to the number of CEUs from audio or visual media

No changes were made to the general provision, disciplinary proceedings or fee schedule portions of the rules and laws with the 2022 updates.

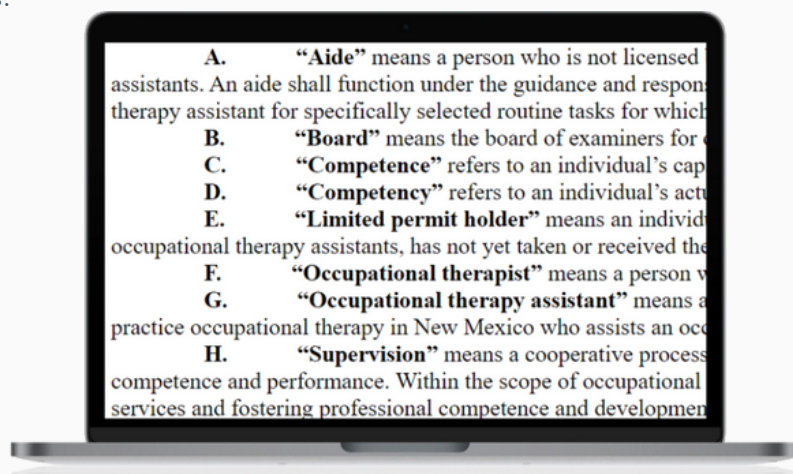


Image above is from the updated Rules and Laws of Occupational Therapy.

The full rules and laws can be found at:

<https://www.srca.nm.gov/nmac-home/nmac-titles/title-16-occupational-and-professional-licensing/chapter-15-occupational-therapists/>

More information about the New Mexico Regulation and Licensing Department Board can be found at:  
NM Regulation and Licensing Department Website:

<https://www.rld.nm.gov/boards-and-commissions/individual-boards-and-commissions/occupational-therapy/ot-board-information/>

Want to Lend your Efforts to the NMOTA Board?

If interested, please visit our board member web page

<https://www.nmota.org/board-members> and complete the volunteer form.

Your voice matters and can participate in meetings virtually.