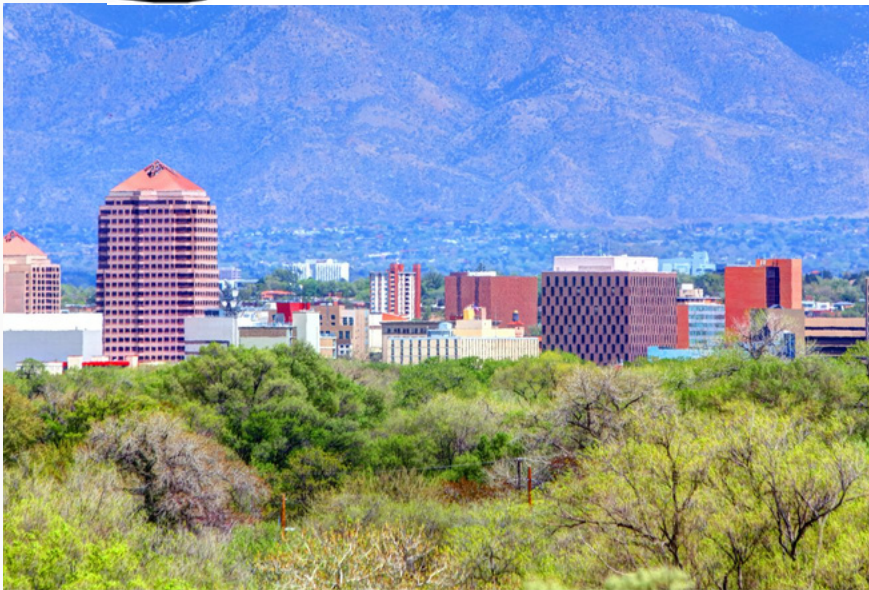


# NMOTA

New Mexico Occupational Therapy Association

THE REACHER  
SPRING NEWSLETTER 2023



## NMOTA 2023 Annual Conference "Functionality and Holism"

Practice Area

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AUGUST 18-19, 2023

CALL FOR PRESENTATIONS!  
DETAILS IN NEWSLETTER

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The Reacher was edited by Rachel Wainwright, Communications and Social Media Chair for NMOTA  
Contact us - -email: [communications@nmota.org](mailto:communications@nmota.org) or complete the form

## Meet Our President

DARA SANDERS-ACEVES

Hi! My name is Dara Sanders-Aceves. I am a loud and proud practicing occupational therapy assistant. I have been going at it for thirteen years. I have been in numerous settings including inpatient rehab, school setting, early intervention, and home health. I am currently a full-time instructor in the Eastern New Mexico University-Roswell Occupational Therapy Assistant Program with my masters in education. I am highly interested in writing up a Labor Market Analysis for the profession in New Mexico. From the discoveries, it truly gives insight for opportunity for future practitioners of our state. With that being said, it has made me realize my leadership potential and developed skills to be a part of a great team we have here at NMOTA. As an academician, I am seeing the challenges in declines in student enrollment, underemployments, need for life-long learning, evolving needs and expectations of the student, and emerging technologies. However, these are all opportunities as well for growth not only as an educator, but in the field for occupational therapy and our association. I am excited to say that I have gone to AOTA and have retained so much material to bring back to the association and the members of it. By sharing this information, I am confident that all of the members will be satisfied with some beneficial changes that will better serve you and your practice.



Image: Dara Sanders-Aceves

## Meet our Treasurer

MELISSA TENCZA

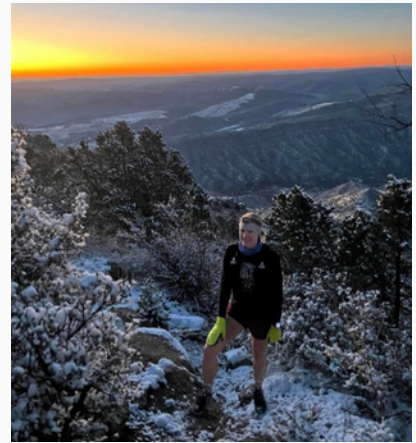


Image: Meliisa Tencza

I graduated from UNM's OTGP in 2016 and have worked around the state in home health, the schools, and now, in a mixed inpatient/outpatient pediatric setting in Albuquerque, NM. I have also facilitated Problem Based Learning for first and second year MOT students and look forward to getting more teaching experience and exposure. I love the profession of OT for the way we bring a fresh perspective, ask deeper questions, and truly learn about our clients and their potential!

I have been a member of NMOTA for about 9 years and decided to take on a bigger role this year to learn new skills and to better understand what's required to keep this profession going at a state level. As Treasurer, I have noticed some of the challenges that come with managing funds of a non-profit. There is quite a balance required to provide high-quality, meaningful events for members while ensuring longevity in an organization that is fully dependent on membership involvement and donations. I see the importance of membership and want members to equally feel this relationship is beneficial. I am excited about many opportunities to connect with colleagues across the state, especially now that more of the board is outside of Albuquerque. I have enjoyed working with the current board so far and look forward to what the rest of the year will bring.

In my free time I enjoy trail running, mountain biking, hiking, reading, and spending time with my friends and animals. Thank you for electing me and please reach out if you have questions or want to get more involved!

## The Benefit of NMOTA to OT Practitioners (OTs and OTAs) in New Mexico:

The Occupational Therapy profession has a stronger advocacy voice when OTs and OTAs join. Our work benefits all OT practitioners in the state. Here's how:

- NMOTA ensures our distinct value:
  - NMOTA fought for years to ensure that the scope of practice for OT practitioners in New Mexico is updated to promote our distinct value.
  - Protecting our scope of practice means that professions like life coaches, physical trainers, and other non-licensed professions cannot claim to work within our scope of practice.
  - NMOTA will advocate for the occupational therapy scope of practice every time the bill sunsets (expires).
- NMOTA keeps OTs and OTAs connected:
  - The NMOTA annual conference is the best OT party in the state.
  - Conference connects OTs and OTAs to experts in different fields from NM and other states.
  - The Conference connects students with different practice settings (and future employers).
  - NMOTA also connects OTs and OTAs on our website and social media.
- NMOTA keeps OTs and OTAs informed:
  - Our newsletters (published by e-mail to membership and on our website for all OT practitioners) highlight important issues, such as the changes to the OT Rules and Laws made in 2022. This was first presented to OTs and OTAs at the annual conference, then published to all in our Fall 2022 newsletter.
  - OTs and OTAs who present at conferences earn three-times the CEUs as their presentation length (so a 90 minute presentation = 4.5 CEUs for the presenters).
- NMOTA ensures that lawmakers know about our powerful profession:
  - NMOTA follows legislation to watch for issues important to OTs, OTAs, and our clients.
  - NMOTA advocated for the National OT Compact in 2022, which will make it easier for OTs and OTAs who work along state borders to practice in other states (or have clinical supervision from other states). We will continue to advocate for this measure as our membership sees fit.
  - NMOTA updates OT practitioners on legislative matters on our website and social media.
- NMOTA needs a strong membership base to serve OTs and OTAs:
  - Our profession is stronger when we are connected by sharing knowledge and networking.
  - Lawmakers know that NMOTA advocates for the whole profession when OTs and OTAs participate through their membership and on committees.

Compiled by Mary Thelander Hill

Want to lend your efforts to the NMOTA board? If interested, please visit our web page <https://www.nmota.org/board-members> and complete the volunteer form.

Your voice matters and you can participate in meetings virtually.



## Representative to the Assembly

CARMEN MCCLELLAND

There were 5 motions set before the representative assembly. All 5 motions were adopted. These 5 motions are:

1. Critical care and OT practice across the lifespan
2. COE report on entry level competencies
3. Establish work group-sustainability and climate change
4. Develop societal statement and climate change
5. Strategic implementation plan for sustainability recommendations

There were 3 requests for action submitted to the RA. The RA declined further action on all of these:

1. Community mental health resource document
2. Policy on appropriate use of credentials
3. Guidance on school choice legislation



Image: Carmen McClelland

AOTA Information: ACOTE has asked for feedback on the draft for the ACOTE standards. Here is the link to learn more about the potential changes.

<https://acoteonline.org/call-for-comment-on-draft-acote-standards-and-notice-of-open-hearing/> We will send out further updates as they happen.

AOTPAC Information: For 2022, PAC raised \$157,445.68! In 2022, 88 candidates were supported from 33 states. Of these, 87 won—98.9% success rate. The current goal for 2023 is \$175,000. If you are an AOTA member, please consider donating to AOTPAC.

## Nominating Chair

SARAH SUTHERLIN



Image: Sarah Sutherlin

Would you like to volunteer with NMOTA? Elections for the executive board will be held in September as we get ready for our annual conference. Please consider running for Vice President or Secretary (2-4 hours per month commitment). Each are 2 year terms that begin in January of 2024.

Open positions that we would love to fill ASAP include a continuing education chair (2-4 hours per month commitment) and a legislative co-chair (time commitment varies, busiest during December and January ). Please reach out to me if you are interested or have any questions.

Sarah Sutherlin, nominating chair  
[nominating@nmota.org](mailto:nominating@nmota.org)

## In Memory of Micci A. Boyce

BY SARAH SUTHERLIN

MICCI IS REMEMBERED AS A KIND SUPERVISOR,  
MENTOR, OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST,  
FIELDWORK EDUCATOR, AND MENTOR TO MANY.

Micci A. Boyce, OTR/L, CHT passed peacefully on 1/20/2023 surrounded by her family and dear friends, after courageously traveling a long road with primary peritoneal cancer. She was born 6/7/1965 in Carlsbad, NM, grew up in Albuquerque, NM, and graduated from Eldorado High School in 1983. She attended and graduated from NMSU before working as a costume designer and maker on Broadway. Upon returning to NM, she attended the Occupational Therapy program at UNM and was in their first graduating class in 1995. She worked as an OT in the schools for several years, began work at UNMH in 2007, and retired from there in February of 2022. She worked at UNMH in a supervisory position and later as an incredibly gifted Certified Hand Therapist, clinical instructor, and mentor to many. Her kindness, humor, wisdom and skill helped and healed countless patients, friends, and family. Micci's heartfelt interests included quilting, sewing, knitting, live music, travel, and enjoying fine food with her friends and family. She was proud to be independent with all of her ADLs until the very end! Her compassion, loyalty, and generosity will be deeply missed. She is preceded in death by her sister Tracy Boyce, and is survived by her parents, Garth and Stana Boyce, brother, Brian Boyce, son, Francisco "Kiko" Dill-Boyce, daughter and son-in-law, Jesus and Sofia Ibarra, and her two adoring grandchildren.

Her services were held Saturday February 18th, at French Funerals.



Image: Micci A. Boyce



Image: Micci A. Boyce

## Practice Areas

### KAREN MESTAS-HARRIS

Karen Mestas-Harris, OTR/L is the New Mexico Ambassador for NBCOT. The NBCOT Ambassador Program is a volunteer initiative launched by NBCOT in 2020 to further promote its mission of serving the public interest by enhancing stakeholder outreach and strengthening stakeholder relationships. This includes candidates, certificants, regulators, educators, professional leaders/advocates, employers, etc. Another aim is to increase the presence of NBCOT at the state level to promote information exchange. Karen attends various NM Occupational Therapy Regulation and Licensing Board Meetings and bridges the gap from the national to state level through information exchange. She also attends the NMOTA conference and assists in the NBCOT booth for information and collaboration. Finally, another aim is to provide access to NBCOT certification information and services to students and certificants through NMOTA communication and outreach to the OT/OTA programs in our state.



Image: Karen Mestas-Harris

Karen has found great value in collaborating and connecting with other ambassadors and NBCOT to identify New Mexico needs and trends as well as advocate for our profession and OT/OTA programs. Many of the NBCOT Ambassadors are used in pilot programs to further enhance the certificant and examination experience. They were able to pilot some new self assessments and case simulations that are now available for free to all OTR and COTA certificants. Our NM state licensing board accepts any units earned through the Navigator for license renewal continuing education requirements. For our OT and OTA students there are tools that test domain level knowledge and exam preparedness via the Study Pack. All of these can be found at [nbcot.org](http://nbcot.org). Finally, NBCOT is dedicated to creating awareness for change. They have created a tool that is free to the public to better understand, experience, and accept differences and work toward making ourselves and our world a better place. The JEDI Reflection Points stand for Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion and focus on self reflection and growth. You can learn, understand, and move toward change here: <http://www.jedireflectionpoints.com>

Karen's term as NM Ambassador will end December 2024. If you are interested in serving as the NM ambassador please contact her at [practiceareas@nmota.org](mailto:practiceareas@nmota.org) or fill out an application here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/9ZRJ9SH>.

You can find more information here <https://www.nbcot.org/ambassadors>



# Conference Committee

SHYLA ERVIN, ALONDRA JIMENEZ, OMAR AUBERT, BREANNA GASS

Proposals for discussions, presentations and/or posters are being accepted for the 2023 NMOTA Annual Conference. We are looking for proposals for presentations that speak to sensory related practices, adaptive techniques, or how MOHO or any other Frames of Reference are applied throughout the changes in our lifespan as we grow and practice our own occupations. Sessions that address functionalism across the lifespan and across practice settings, including, but not limited to rehabilitation/habilitation, mental health, early intervention, community based, and private practice are encouraged. Other topic areas include new research, evidence-based practices, and current/new programs.

This year's annual conference theme is "Functionality & Holism". Therefore, we are looking for ALL willing practitioners-no matter the initials, COTA/L, OTR/L; to consider submitting a presentation proposal. Every year we gather to continue our education and what better way than to learn from one another?

- Think of the time you first started practicing in your setting or the time you switched settings. What would you have liked to know back then that you know now?
- Do you really enjoy a specific intervention in your setting? GREAT, how can you share that or your intervention ideas to help others apply it back in their setting?
- What resources do you turn to when you need inspiration for treatment ideas? How can you find resources for the population you work with?
- Sharing your knowledge on functional and holistic OT practice will improve the OT and OTA profession in NM.

How to propose a presentation:

- PRESENTATION PROPOSAL due date is May 31, 2023. Click here to submit your proposal:  
<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSe6K-mX8nw39GglbHu3EjXLHUhjLdiqrRZu3PclNcT5aDINbA/viewform>
- POSTER-PROJECT PROPOSAL due date is July 14, 2023. Click here to submit your proposal:  
<https://forms.gle/dXiyrG7uRtzwyYHy5>

Please refer any questions about the Call For Presentations, Posters, or general conference information to: [conference@nmota.org](mailto:conference@nmota.org). Submission forms must be complete for consideration.



Image: Shyla Ervin (Co-Chair)



Image: Alondra Jimenez (Co-Chair)

## Conference Committee

SHYLA ERVIN, ALONDRA JIMENEZ, OMAR AUBERT, BREANNA GASS

The NMOTA Conference Committee is excited to announce the Marketplace Experience that will be offered at our upcoming Annual Conference. Our intent is to provide attendees with resources and merchandise they can purchase and take home from the conference that will assist in not only treatment, but also in play and leisure.

In honor of the 2023 NMOTA Annual Conference, we would like to extend the opportunity for you to showcase unique talents and products at this year's event.

- I'm interested in reserving a table to sell merchandise.
- I'm all over it, how do I sign up?
- Need more info?
- Contact us at [conference@nmota.org](mailto:conference@nmota.org)

Please share this information with your network and anyone you would like to see as a Marketplace Vendor at the 2023 NMOTA Annual Conference.

The deadline for interested participants is June 1, 2023. Thank you in advance for your consideration and time.

## Membership Chair

SUE SHELLEY

Thank you to all of our active members 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.



Image: Sue Shelley

A reminder to all members planning on attending the 2023 NMOTA Annual Conference: In order to receive the “member code” for registration, your membership must be active through September 2023. 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/OTA 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 March 1, 2023, we have 201 active members. Thanks again, to all of our members!



## Communications and Social Media Chair

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 of 2022. By serving as Communications Chair, I received credit for specific projects in Advocacy and Community Health coursework at the UNM OT Graduate program. For the Community Health service learning project, I collaborated with an NMOTA executive board member to focus on engaging in activities that focus on human and community needs. For this project, we complete a project with a specific outcome for a community. In my case, my community focuses on New Mexico occupational therapy practitioners. The Communications Chair advocates and shares information about the activities of the New Mexico Occupational Therapy Association for OTs and OTAs in NM.

Currently we are looking for someone to join the Communications Committee and Chair. I graduate May, 2023 and must focus on Fieldwork rotations. This position is a rewarding volunteer experience that serves as a voice for our association. The association's Communications Chair educates, raises public awareness, advocates, and promotes occupational therapy in the media and news as well as keeping New Mexico occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants aware of any events or important news and updates by email or social media.

The Primary Duties of the Communication Chair are:

- Sharing information about upcoming events through e-mailing membership.
- Posting news and events relevant to New Mexico OT Practice on social media.
- Editing a Fall and a Spring Newsletter that highlights past and future events for the association as well as the work of the different committees.
- Attending NMOTA Board meetings 6-8 times a year and sharing your perspective.
- Reporting about the work of the Communication Committee at the NMOTA Annual Conference.
- Responding to questions in the "contact us" sections of social media and web pages (training will be provided by the outgoing Communications Chair and Association Secretary).



Image: Rachel Wainwright

If you are interested in participating on the NMOTA Board as a Communications Committee member or chair, or in any other positions, please contact Sarah Sutherlin at [nominating@nmota.org](mailto:nominating@nmota.org).



# Communications and Social Media Chair: Students, Show us your Posters!

BY RACHEL WAINWRIGHT

OT and OTA students should submit a poster proposal to present during the NMOTA Annual Conference student poster session. Every year, the conference committee from the NMOTA sends out a few announcements for poster presentations. OT and OTA students are eligible and encouraged to submit posters. Every year at the NMOTA conference, NM OTs, OTAs, and students enjoy reading posters and listening to the presenters explain posters in detail during the Friday Happy-Hour “Sunset Soiree.” It is a relaxed atmosphere where OT and OTA students can talk about what they have been learning with OT practitioners (and future employers!). It is a friendly and kind place to give a poster session.

At the 2022 NMOTA conference, a classmate and I presented a poster discussing a rare condition of the upper extremity and what OTs can do to relieve pain from this condition. Many OTs and OTAs took interest and asked questions in our poster since this was an uncommon diagnosis. Presenting the poster felt rewarding by sharing our knowledge to fellow practitioners. During this experience, we met many OTs and OTAs and talked to them about their OT experience. Presenting for our audience also helped us practice our presenting skills and express our confidence. There was a feeling of accomplishment after the conference. The best part? This experience can be added to your resume! NMOTA will request proposals for posters in May and June for the 2023 NMOTA Annual Conference being held on August 18 and 19th. Here’s the poster my classmate and I presented in 2022:

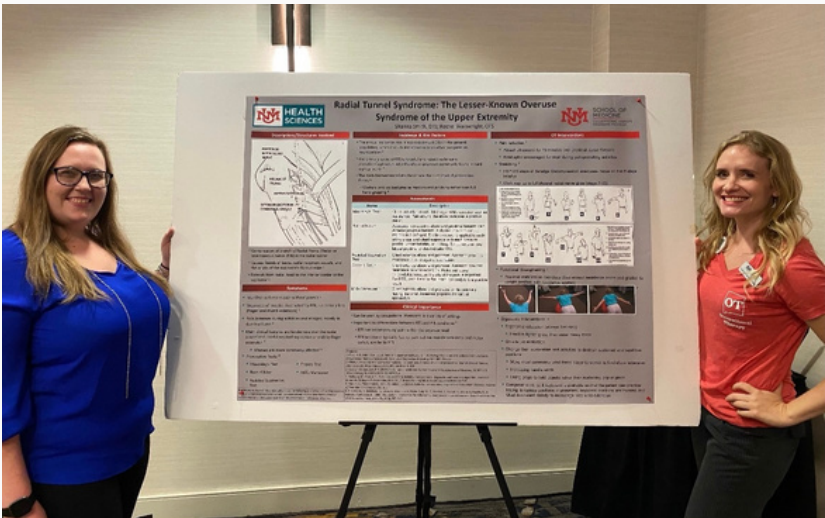


Image: Shanna Smith (left) and Rachel Wainwright (right)



# AOTA INSPIRE: 2023 Annual Conference and Expo

ALL IMAGES PROVIDED BY NEW MEXICO OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY PRACTITIONERS AND STUDENTS





## Legislative Committee

JASON DUNLAP, JESSICA SALAZAR, JESSICA GALEWSKY

Happy spring from the legislative committee. On February 15th our committee hosted “Legislative Day at the State Capitol.” These previous two years the legislative committee hosted an online Legislative Day because of the pandemic. This year we were very happy to be able to host our annual Legislative Day in Santa Fe. Due to all good things are never without some character-building moments, a winter storm blew in the night before - some OTs and OTAs who were planning to attend at the capitol could not join us. We are Occupational Therapy practitioners! We rose to the challenge, adapted our response, and we prevailed in offering a Zoom option that was successful along with the intrepid advocates at the roundhouse.

The majority of UNM Graduate OT students were unable to travel to Santa Fe because of the weather, thus they were able to advocate via the Zoom option. They were of great help advocating for our profession! Those that did make it to Santa Fe the day before were Occupational Therapy Assistant Students from Eastern New Mexico University, Roswell and NMOTA Board Members (and a couple brave OT students).



Image: Jason Dunlap

The main purpose of Legislative Day is to advocate for our profession to our legislators. Many legislators do not know what occupational therapy is, thus as occupational therapy practitioners and students, we were able to educate many about our profession and how valuable OT is to our community. In fact, our student colleagues from Eastern New Mexico University - Roswell briefly met with Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham.

We, as occupational therapy professionals, also supported and educated our elected Representatives on a few house and senate bills that affect our profession. This year was a special year as the main bill that we advocated for was House Bill 392, the Occupational Therapy Inter-State Compact. This bill has been in the works for the last 2 years and the legislative committee and been very involved in the process, attending meetings on Zoom with American Occupational Therapy Association, and the National Board for Certification for Occupational Therapy. What came to fruition this year was that we had 5 sponsors support our bill: Representative Marian Matthews, Representative Gail Armstrong, Representative Tara Jaramillo, Representative Elizabeth Thomson, and Representative Natalie Figueroa. We are very grateful for their support.



## Legislative Committee

JASON DUNLAP, JESSICA SALAZAR, JESSICA GALEWSKY

As a committee we are responsible for any advice or testimony required to see our bill go through the legislative process. Also, our association has a Lobbyist that works for us. Her name is Linda Siegle, and she has served many years lobbying for our profession. Linda not only was at our side this year with our new bill, but behind the scenes speaking with legislators and educating why our bill is so important. What is the Occupational Therapy Licensure Compact, you may ask?

The Occupational Therapy Licensure Compact is a legal agreement with other states participating in this compact to practice Occupational Therapy without having to apply for another state license. For example, if you live in Colorado and Colorado is your OT Licensure state, and you want to work in Georgia, then you don't have to get a Georgia license. Why? Both states have passed this OT compact law. What came about with our New Mexico Occupational Therapy Licensure Compact?

The NM Occupational Therapy Licensure Compact did not pass in 2023 because our bill was only heard in the House Health and Human Services Committee. Linda Siegle and our Legislative Committee Chair testified at that committee meeting. The House Health and Human Services Committee unanimously passed the bill. Unfortunately our bill was not heard at any of the other required committees, thus our bill was not able to be voted on. We came to find out that 1089 bills were filed during this years session. As of March 22nd, only 25 bills were passed. Our Governor had until April 7th to sign or veto bills.

Overall, this legislative session was a successful year for our legislative committee. We had the opportunity to deepen our relationship the New Mexico Physical Therapy Association, with AOTA and NBCOT, our legislators that sponsored the OT compact bill, and OT students and practitioners. As you can see, our legislative committee serves an important role not only for the New Mexico Occupational Therapy Association, but for our clients and patients that we serve. We thank you members of NMOTA for your continued support. We as the legislative committee will continue to serve and do our best to help support and advocate for Occupational Therapy!

Jason Dunlap, COTA, has stepped down from Legislative Chair after fulfilling this position since 2020. We are grateful for Jason's work for the NMOTA and wish him well in his new life chapter. We are happy to introduce Jessica Salazar, MSW, MOT, OTR/L as the new NMOTA Legislative Chair and excited for what she will bring to our association.

Sincerely,

The Legislative Committee



# Occupational Therapy Legislative Day at The Capitol

PICTURES SUPPLIED BY ENMU/ROSWELL SOTA CLUB - IMAGES OF ENMU STUDENTS (AND TWO UNM STUDENTS) WHO BRAVED A WINTER STORM TO REPRESENT OUR PROFESSION AT THE ROUND HOUSE AND MEET OUR LAW-MAKERS

