

NMOTA

New Mexico Occupational Therapy Association

Winter Newsletter 2020



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www.nmota.org

NMOTA is a tax exempt organization under IRS section 501(c)(6).

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE CORNER

It's been a weird and crazy year. COVID has affected us in so many ways and will continue to affect us in ways we cannot imagine. From how we work, to personal and social perspectives, to how we operate daily, this pandemic has literally altered our lives in ways none of us could have ever imagined. Along with the innumerable "negative" ways COVID has altered our lives, it has also shown us how creative, innovative, and just plain clever we, as OTs, can be. Making the shift from our traditional way of providing services (in person) to a "virtual" way (aka, remote), to a consultation model, and training of staff and parents in ways we never imagined, OTs have stunned and impressed everyone around them with our unique way of doing things.

NMOTA has made the shift as well, thanks to the dedication of our Executive Board and all of the committee chairs and volunteers. Most notable is the way that our Membership and Conference Committees stepped up and created the Brews and CEU's series of online CEU events in lieu of our annual conference. This series was an overwhelming success and offered much needed CEUs to both members and non-members who were at a loss as how to meet the annual CEU requirements for continued licensure. A big tip of the hat goes to Joanna Cosbey, Rachel Kay, Katie Meyers, Jessica Hafner, and the countless volunteers who presented and organized this event for pulling this all together.

One of the many consequences of not having our annual conference was that membership has dropped rather precipitously. Most people, including myself, pay annual dues when they register for our annual conference. Because there was no conference, those dues have not been paid and our membership level has suffered, greatly. I plan on sending all of the past members a personal plea to login and renew their membership to keep our association strong.

Speaking of our annual conference, please be sure to save the date for the 2021 NMOTA conference. We are cautiously optimistic we will be able to hold a traditional conference and have reserved the Marriott Hotel in Albuquerque for August 27th & 28th. With our esteemed and long-time dedicated members Gerri Duran, Gail Stockman and Stephanie Singleton chairing our 2021 Conference, I KNOW our next annual conference will be a huge success.

Finally, a huge thanks to all board members, chairs and volunteers, who have kept this ship upright and steering straight ahead. As with all things, COVID, including all of the pain, heartache and negative consequences that it brought, will come to an end. And because of our wonderful crew, we will not only weather the storm, but come out of it stronger than ever.

Robert Hobbs, OTR/L
President, NMOTA

ASSOCIATION UPDATES

Legislative Committee

Dear Members of the New Mexico Occupational Therapy Association,

The Legislative Committee hopes all members of the New Mexico Occupational Therapy Association and their families are safe and healthy. The Legislative Committee has been busy these last couple of months.

Interstate OT Compact

AOTA and NBCOT are now working with state Occupational Therapy Associations to start the process of an Interstate Occupational Therapy Compact. About 10 state OT associations will be presenting this interstate compact at their next legislative session.

Some of the key benefits of the compact are that it will allow an Occupational Therapist and Occupational Therapy Assistant to work in other states under their “home state” license. It will help occupational therapy practitioners that have to relocate from one state to another because their spouse is in the military. It will allow OT practitioners to provide telehealth across state lines.

We as a committee discussed this compact in a few of our meetings. Our lobbyist Linda Seigel was a great help to us. The committee has decided that we will wait until the 2023 Legislative Session to present this Compact. It will allow our committee to learn how other state OT Associations presented this Compact to their Legislators.

Legislative Day 2021

This year's Legislative Day is planned for **February 22nd**. We are working on a virtual live Legislative Day if in-person gatherings are not possible.

NM RLD

Our lobbyist Linda Seigle shared with us that because the Regulation and Licensing Division lack the appointments required for each profession, RLD is thinking about combining OT and PT into one board which we as a committee do not support. At our next meeting we will be discussing this matter and then share with all the members.

Volunteer Opportunities

We are looking for more volunteers to be involved in the Legislative Committee. It is a great opportunity to advocate for your profession and your clients/patients that we serve. We invite you to be a part of our team.

We wish you all the best.

If you all have any questions for our Committee please email us at:

legislative@nmota.org



Conference Committee

Greetings NMOTA members!

Your NMOTA Conference Committee is looking forward to seeing you at Fall Conference 2021! As a reminder, it will be held on **August 27th and 28th**. The contract has been signed and we will be back at the Marriot located at Louisiana and I-40 in Albuquerque. Your keynote speaker will be AOTA President Wendy Hildenbrand.

We are excited to announce that our plenary speaker will be New Mexico's own Melissa Winkle! We are already working on getting some new vendors for the event. This is looking to be another excellent conference! Make sure to save the date on your 2021 calendars!

Sincerely,
Your Conference Committee

BOARD OF EXAMINERS UPDATE

It is our pleasure to be able to introduce you to the new members of the New Mexico Board of Examiners for Occupational Therapy:

Carla Sue Wilhite, Professional Member
Margaret "Sarah" Porte, Professional Member
Kelly Lorraine Aragon, Professional Member
Buzz C. Daniel-Troy, Public Member
Carmel Martinez, Public Member

We would like to thank Gail Stockman (professional member), Mike Katko (public member) and Mabel Marquez (public member) for their 10 years of service to the board and the profession of occupational therapy.



MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Denise Fajardo, OTR/L

The New Mexico Occupational Therapy Association is proud of its members and grateful to have each one. For this reason, we will feature one of our amazing members in each newsletter.

If you would like to spotlight one of your co-workers, who is a member, please email us at communications@nmota.org.

Where do you currently practice and what is/are your role(s) there?

I know this question is regarding my “current” practice, but I think it is important to know my history within the OT practice because it shapes me into the type of practitioner I am today.

Prior to graduating from the OT program at WNMU in 2016, I graduated with an OTA degree in 1996 from ENMU in Roswell. I worked as a COTA at Carlsbad Public Schools for 16 years. I later worked as a COTA for Silver City School district for 3 years. I entered the WNMU OT program while employed as a COTA with Silver City School District.

I am currently an Occupational Therapist with Silver City School District and a PRN OT for Gila Regional Medical Center. As an OT I have also worked in Silver City area with Life Quest Early Intervention (FIT program) and AmberCare home health.

How long have you been a NMOTA member?

I honestly don’t know. There were a few random years I did not renew, but I have been a member pretty much since become a COTA in 1996.



How long have you been an occupational therapy professional?

20 years as a COTA and 4.5 years as an OT.

In short, what influenced you to become and occupational therapy professional?

I was a girl scout leader when my daughters were in elementary school. A speech therapist, whose daughter was in my girl scout troop, told me she thought I’d make a good COTA. I said, “What is a COTA?” I had no idea what OT was or what a COTA did. I did a little research and I really liked what OT stood for. I loved how OT helped people to gain independence with such a variety of diagnoses and settings. I loved that I as an OT professional was not “stuck” in doing the same thing day after day. OT is a versatile and growing profession, the future possibilities are endless.

Please share one of your favorite experiences as an occupational therapy professional.

It is difficult to narrow down only one

favorite experience as an occupational therapy professional. Generally, I love how OT professionals collaborate, share information and support each other so we can grow to become better professionals. I could pick several stories about success or good times during my years as an OT professional, but overall, I have enjoyed every day that I am an OT professional.

What is the most difficult part of your job?

The most difficult part of my job has been educating stake holders on the purpose and value of OT (no we are not only ADL and handwriting specialists) and advocating for our profession.

If you could have known one thing as a new practitioner that you know now, what would it have been?

You will have a lot of disciplines including other OT professionals with different perspectives and approaches to therapy, don't judge, take a piece from each of these people to form your own puzzle so you can mentor other new practitioners as they put their puzzles together.

Do you have any advice for new OT/OTA students or practitioners?

When you are having a rough time, then keep on trucking, it's not the end of the world,

don't give up. Keep your eyes to the sky and see the unlimited possibilities. This too shall pass and you will be GREAT!

What do you enjoy doing outside of work?

I love hiking in the beautiful Gila wilderness, camping, researching/reading, participating in community theater, playing games and, of course, family time.

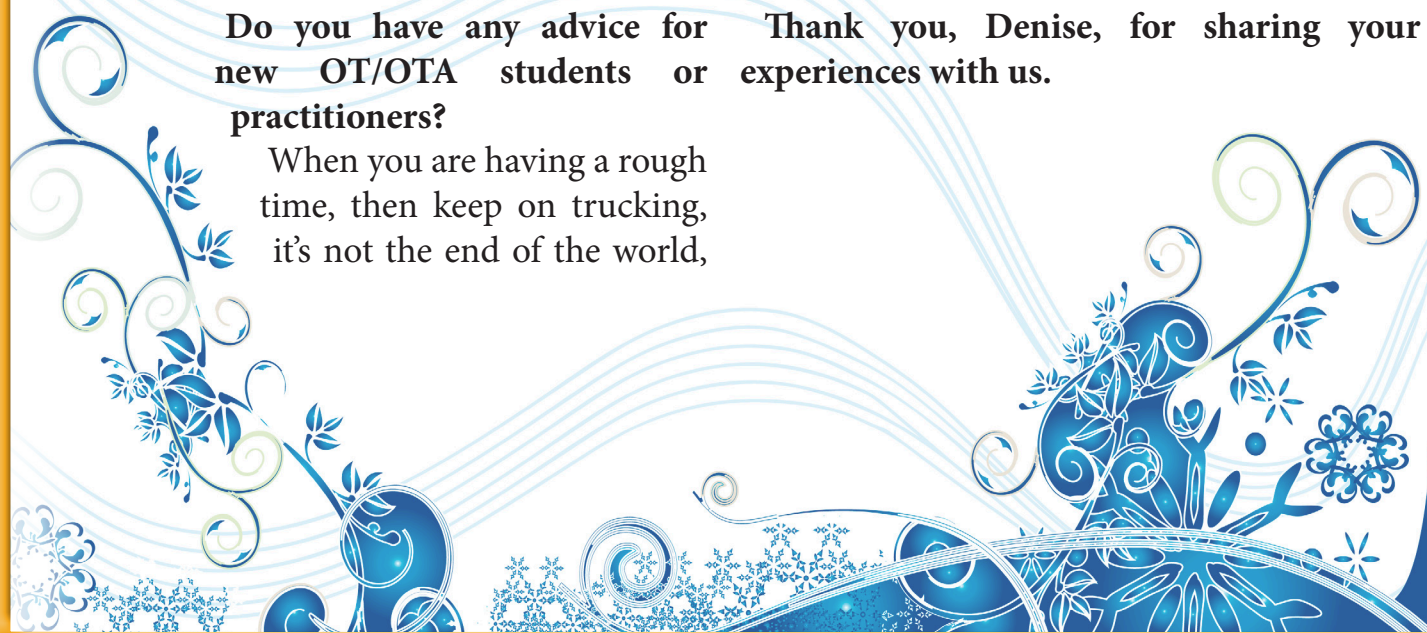
Do you have any dreams for your future you would like to share?

I have recently signed up to take the Prep Course to be able to take the Pediatric Certification Exam from AOTA. Afterwards, I may be interested in continuing my education with an OTD. Baby steps. I would love to work, someday, as an educator at an OT or OTA college program.

Is there anything else you would like to share with all of the NMOTA membership?

The members of NMOTA have already made the great decision of becoming members of this wonderful supportive organization. We all need to convince the rest of NM OT practitioners to join NMOTA.

Thank you, Denise, for sharing your experiences with us.



MEMBER-TO-MEMBER COLUMN

What is the “High” in OT Hybrid Ed?

When one thinks of education in the COVID era, an image of endlessly long Zoom meetings may be conjured, with distracted participants and failing internet connections. This negative image does not have to characterize the current state of education.

Fortunately, the creativity that is the hallmark of our profession serves us well in hybrid classes too. For example, in one assignment, we are adapting games. In addition to grading up and down, we are looking for ways to implement them virtually. Some of the game content can be transferred via email. Other game content has to be suggested to the patient as items found in a normal home. In this manner, we are able to prepare to teach games in the field, help patients modify games to use items found in the home, and play games virtually as well.

Other assignments require us to create videos. We have taped ourselves measuring ROM in family members and have conducted cooking videos wearing masks and adhering to other COVID safety guidelines.

What I find most liberating about our hybrid experience is the randomization of groups created by Zoom. By comparison, in a traditional class, I sat in the same seat near the same people for an entire semester. This seating ritual often led to groupings of people that were seated near each other. I learned much about the handful of people sitting next to me but could barely recall the names of people sitting across the room. With the randomization of people created by Zoom for break out groups, I have spent many hours working with all of my colleagues. In this manner, all 15 of us know much about our peers and have strong connections to everyone. I believe this Zoom feature has caused us to become more flexible and to deepen our relationships and ability to work with a wide variety of people. With an emphasis on building relationships, one can see a high in hybrid classes. We are closer together through our distance learning.

Beth Hayes

San Juan College OTA Student

WHAT'S COMING UP?

Jan 12	Full Board Meeting
Feb 22	Legislative Day
Mar 9	Full Board Meeting
Apr 8	AOTA Annual Conference & Expo
Aug 27-28	NMOTA Annual Conference



Happy Holidays

NMOTA

New Mexico Occupational Therapy Association

NMOTA COMMITTEES

Budget Committee: Responsible for financial affairs of the association regarding the preparation of an annual budget, including budget reporting and gathering information from Board and committees for budget projections.

Communications and Social Media Committee: Responsible for preparing, creating, or sourcing high-quality content for website and social media communications to members, OT community, and the public; as well as news of the association. This committee works collaboratively with the webmaster to maintain, improve, and keep the NMOTA website current. This committee coordinates the newsletter and the marketing efforts of the association.

Conference Committee: Responsible for planning the conference and all related responsibilities including securing the venue, vendors, keynote and plenary speakers, volunteers, and the general speakers and presenters. This committee also must organize volunteers and register conference attendees.

Continuing Education Committee: Responsible for planning, developing, and coordinating NMOTA continuing education events for members across New Mexico.

Legislative Committee: Responsible for responding to legislative calls to action and communicating with AOTA. The Legislative Committee provides direct opportunities to personally participate in the legislative process in our state.

Membership Committee: Responsible for promoting membership in NMOTA and retaining members; including coordinating membership campaigns, sending renewal reminders, issuing membership cards, addressing membership questions, selecting promotional items, and recommending and designing value-added membership benefits.

Nominating Committee: Responsible for elections of the association, including the nominations process, preparing the slate of candidates, holding elections, disseminating the ballot, voting procedures, and announcing winning candidates. Work also includes assisting Committees in recruiting volunteers for committee work. Uses the Bylaws of the Association and Lochrie's Parliamentary Procedure to produce a fair, valid, and legal elections process.

Ad Hoc Committees: These committees are formed for short periods of time to address very specific tasks. In 2019, ad hoc committees included a Rural Committee (charged with working with Membership to coordinate Rural Meet and Greet) and an Occupational Justice Committee (charged with drafting a position statement regarding issues at our southern border).

BENEFITS OF NMOTA MEMBERSHIP

Legislative Advocacy: Membership fees allow us to employ a lobbyist to represent our profession. Lobbying efforts protect OT's and OTA's and help influence and shape public policy surrounding the practice of OT in our state. Our lobbyist ensures that we are maintaining reimbursement, competitive pay, and preventing infringement upon OT's scope of practice by other professions, as well as ensuring that the public has the protections of having OT's maintain state-licensure. In addition to the lobbyist, NMOTA has a legislative committee that provides direct opportunities to personally participate in the legislative process.

State Conference: The NMOTA Annual Conference is an excellent opportunity to hear National Speakers at reduced rates. Additionally, the conference offers fun opportunities to speak with team members in other settings and learn about innovative research.

Leadership Opportunities: Our organization is led and organized by volunteers. As a member, you can chair a committee or join a committee. Many hands make light work. How can your talents, creative capacities, organizational skills, and enthusiasm move this mountain?

Networking: NMOTA is your community to find networking friends, as well as receive validation and affirmation for the distinct professional role you play in your facility, organization, or agency. Social and advocacy events are frequently hosted by the membership and legislative committee. Visit the members-only events calendar to connect with OT's in your community.

Member Forums: Members-only forums give members the opportunity to connect with other practitioners around the state, and can be accessed through our website after you log-on using your NMOTA ID. Forum topics include general discussions, research surveys, new OT/OTA discussion, business development, rural areas, pediatrics, hospitals, schools, mental health, and many more!

VOLUNTEER WITH US!

The New Mexico Occupational Therapy Association is always looking for a few dedicated volunteers. Opportunities are available in all committees and for events.

We also want to know if you are looking for volunteers for your organization.

Find out more at www.nmota.org/volunteer

**From all of us at the New Mexico
Occupational Therapy Association to you,
our most valued members:**

Happy Holidays and a Happy New Year!

