

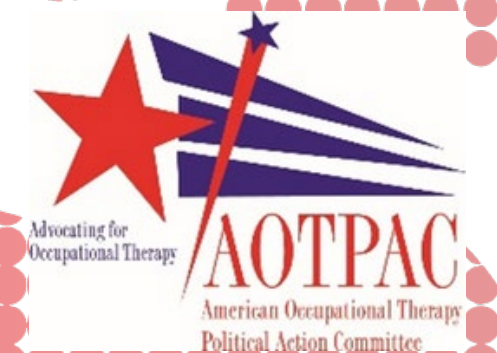
TOGETHER

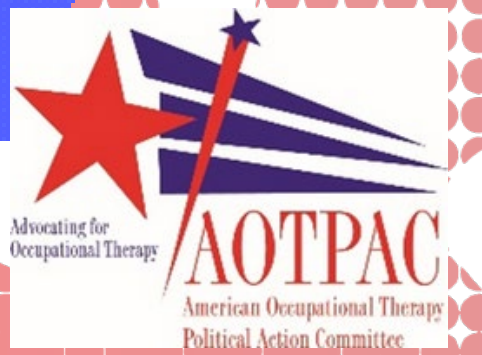
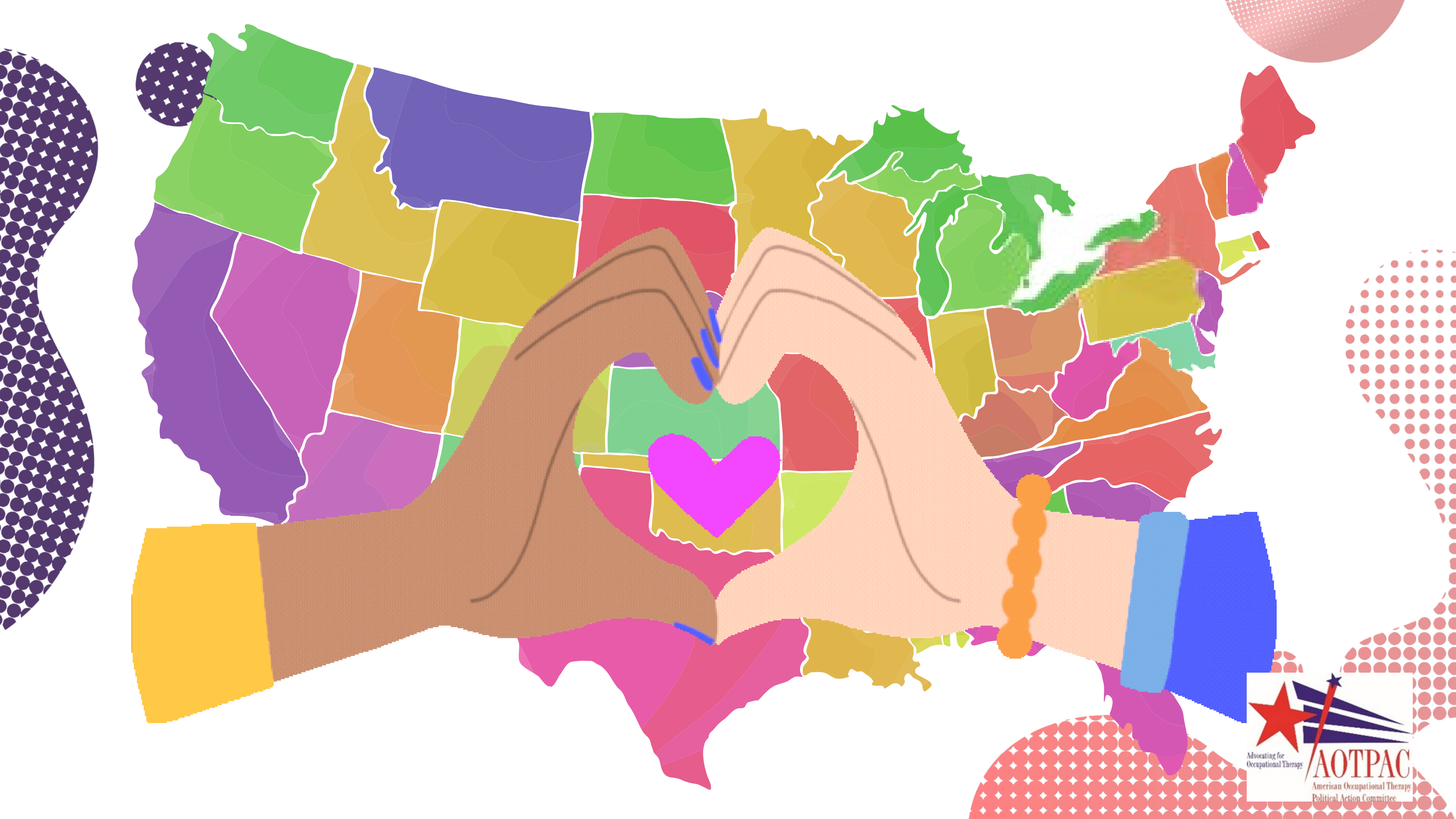
WE CAN

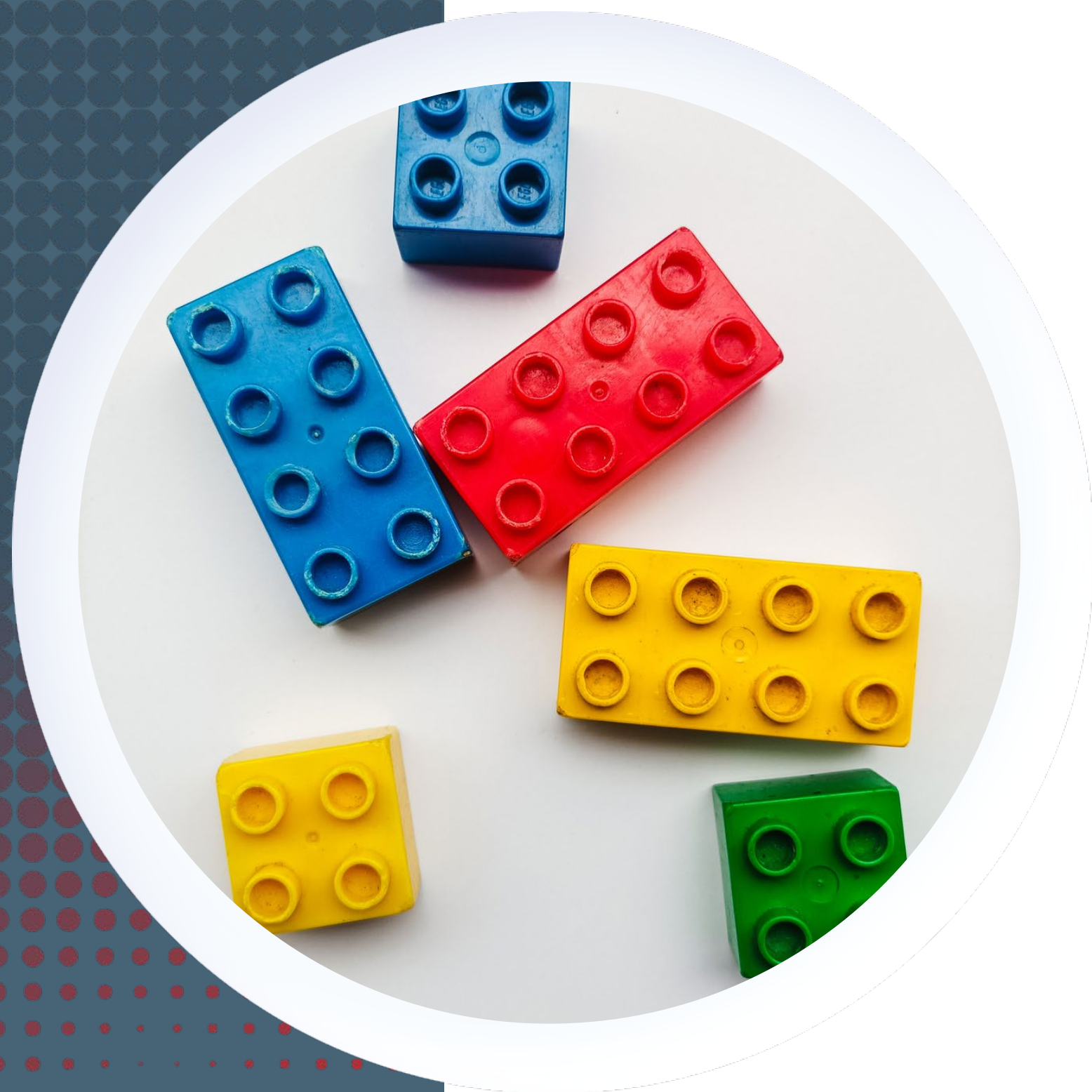
Advance

OCCUPATIONAL
THERAPY

Presented by Dawn Sonnier AOTPAC Chair







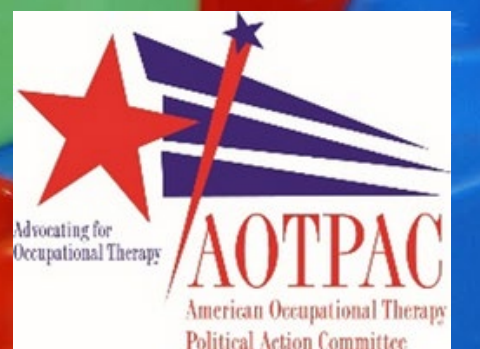
“Each of us can
make a
difference...”

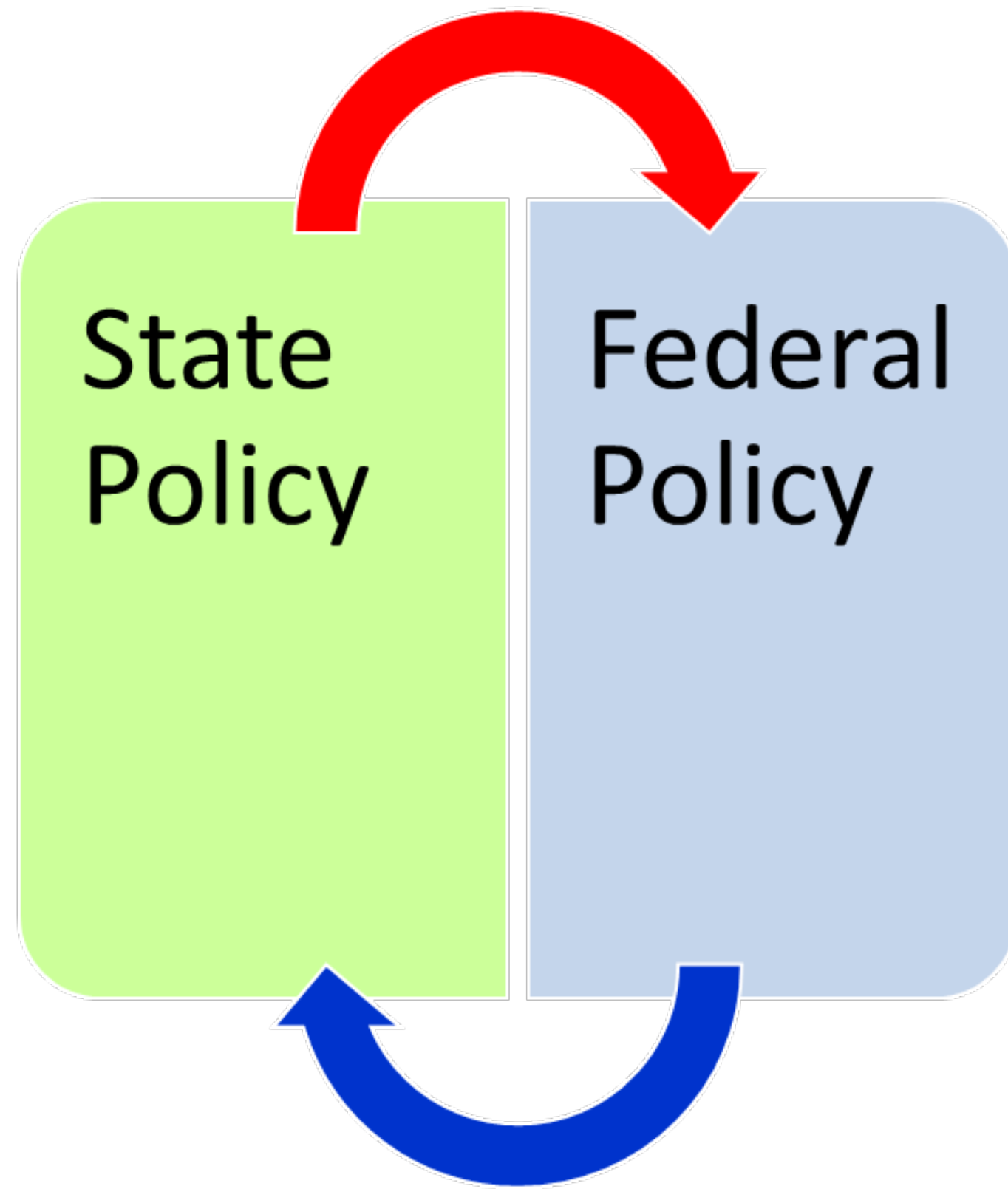
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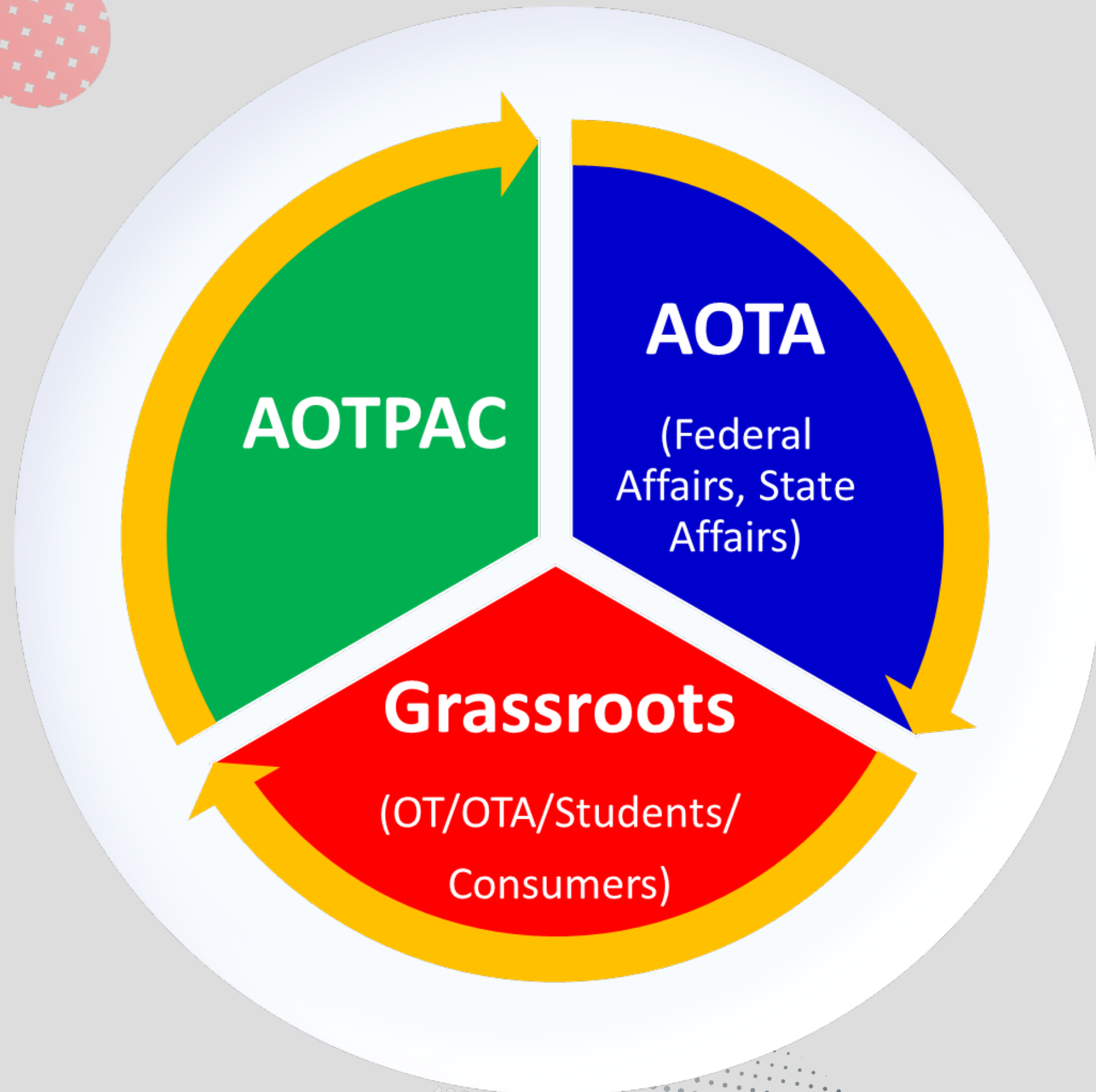
- Barbara

Mikulski

...**TOGETHER** we can make a
change." ~ Barbara Mikulski

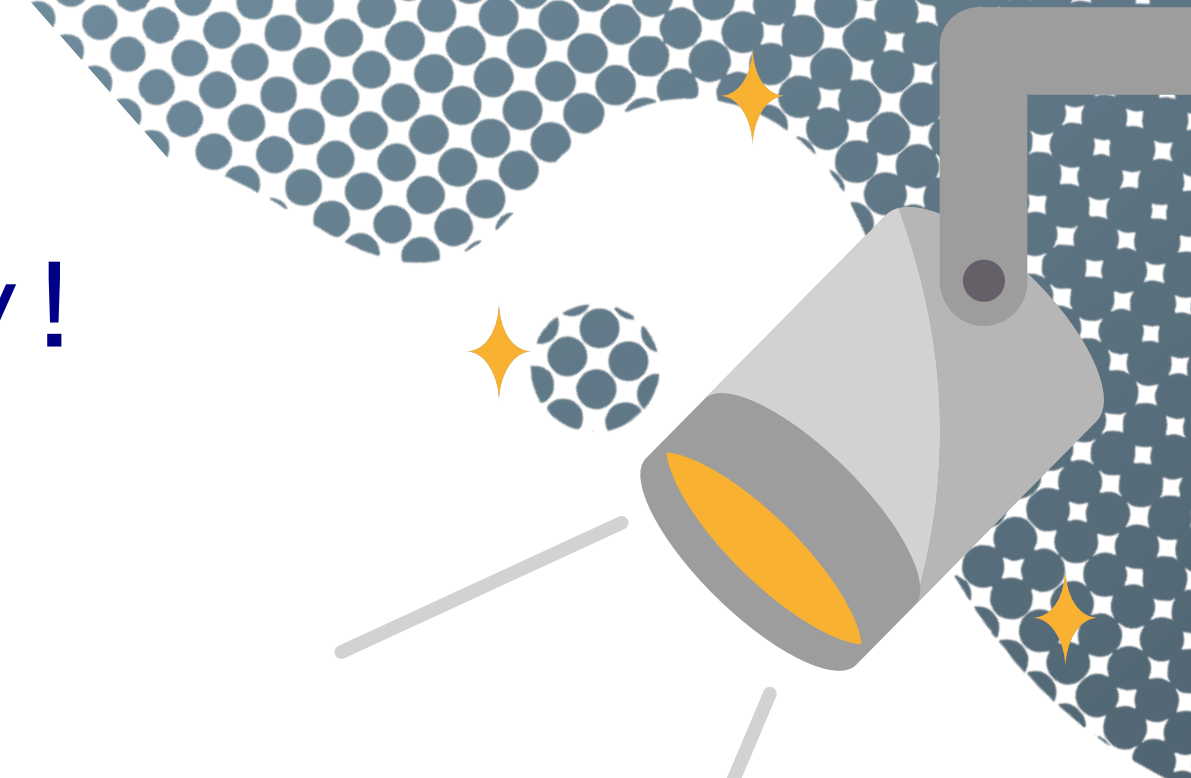






Policy is accomplished

through advocacy!



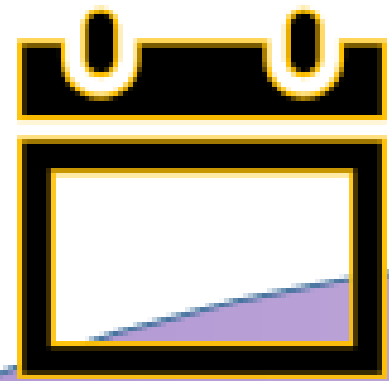
OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

POLICY

CHANGE

ADVOCACY





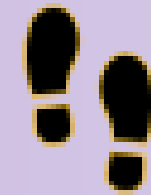
Advocacy Year Round



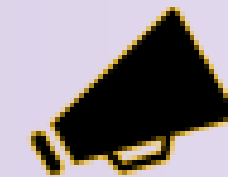
Lots of Bills



Identify Bills
impacting OT



Follow the
Bills (lobbyist)



Get the word out
/ generate buzz

URGENT! Contact Congress and ask them to prevent Medicare cuts to Occupational Therapy

Yahoo/Inbox ☆



● AOTA's Federal Affairs Department

From: fad@aota.org

To: Dawn Sonnier



Thu, Jan 25 at 11:06 AM ☆



American
Occupational Therapy
Association

Hi Dawn;



We urgently need your action.

As you may know, effective, January 1, 2024, the overall payment rates for outpatient occupational therapy services under Medicare were reduced by an estimated 3.1% compared to 2023 payments. This decrease follows several years of cuts related to structural issues with the Medicare Physician Fee Schedule. While these cuts are specific to outpatient Medicare therapy payments, many other payers base their payment rates on the Medicare Fee Schedule.

Please use the link below to contact your legislators and ask them to take action on this vital issue.





AOTPAC
represents
the party
of
Occupational
Therapy





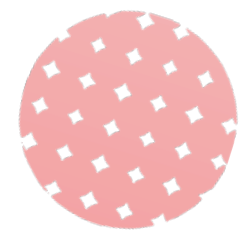
Raise Money



please support our
fundraiser

thank you!





SPECIAL DOLLARS...

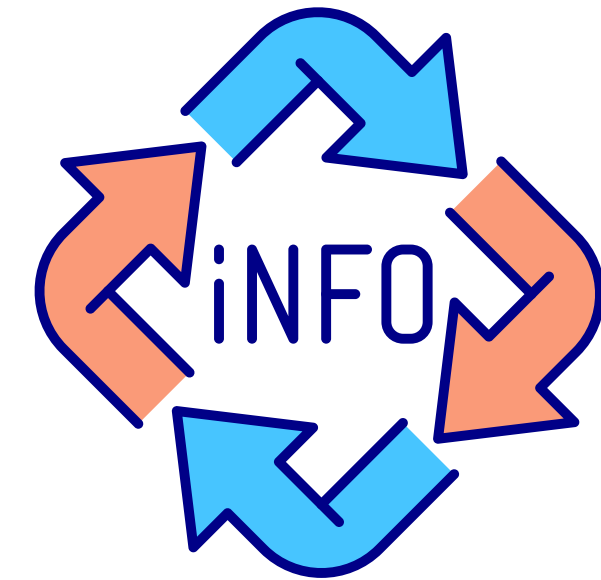


PAC \$\$

Access



Seat at the Table



Educate



EXAMPLE

If a U.S. Representative or U.S. Senator is hosting a fundraising event, PAC dollars can be used to send members like you to the event with policy makers, where you can share about OT.

Federal Policy

- **SHAPES** your profession
- **PROTECTS** your job & services to clients
- Affects **WHERE** you practice & **IF** you can practice at all
- Determines what you **PAID**

How has AOTPAC put OT in the Spotlight?



Supported 88 candidates in 33 states for the 2022 federal general election.



87 won! Historic 99% success rate with only one loss.



Of the funds contributed, 49% went to Democrats and 51% went to Republicans (we must have allies on both sides of the aisle for any bill to pass, thus we want the funds spread as diversely as possible)

2024 Election Year

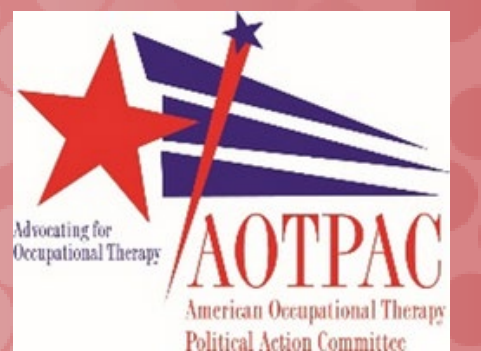


IF elected, he will be the 1st OT in CONGRESS!

Fun Fact

Tim Kennedy, OT – candidate for Congress!!

Tim Kennedy is an OT in NY currently serving as a state Senator. He is running to fill the vacant seat in New York previously held by Rep Brian Higgins (Dist. 26) who resigned.



How is AOTPAC Impacting Policy at the State Level?



SHARE ACT

Licensure Compact

- “There is a technical standard barring a state licensing or certification entity from sharing the fact that a criminal background check was completed with the interstate compact commission.” aota.org

- As we work on the licensure compact, **the FBI will not let some states share background information**

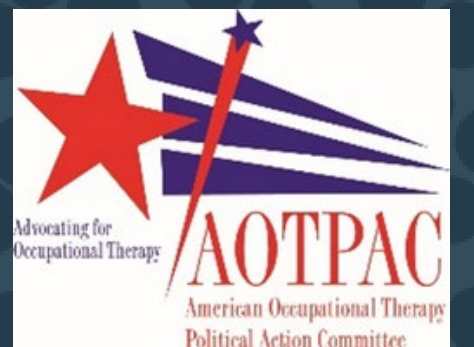
- **Bill @ federal level to allow information to be “share”d**

- **REMOVING BARRIERS to compacts**



Share Act

Will “fix” this issue ensuring access to OT, particularly for patients in underserved or rural areas, while allowing states to protect their authority to determine who is eligible to practice in the state. aota.org



Telehealth

1

Success! AOTA advocated for waivers that allow OT/OTAs to provide services to Medicare beneficiaries via telehealth during public health emergency

2

Success! PHE ended in May 2023, but Congress extended OT/therapy telehealth waivers through December 2024 after AOTA advocacy

3

BENEFITS of Telehealth: Home evals .. ability to virtually “visit” patient’s home/ID safety issues that would not be described in clinical setting by patient; Fewer missed appointments/increased caregiver engagement; Easier for people with disabilities/those with transportation issues.

What's next?

DECEMBER		2024				
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

- H.R. 3875/S. 2880:
 - Would establish OT/OTAs as permanent Medicare telehealth providers along with PTs and SLPs
- Action needed before December 2024
- Contact your Senators/Representative to urge support

Federal Advocacy Issues



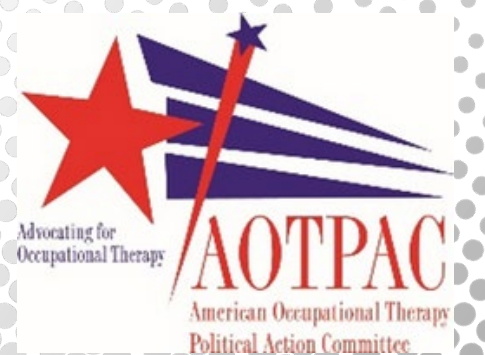


Allied Health Diversity Workforce Act

Signed into law!

Creates an **\$8 million grant** for higher education programs to **attract, recruit, and retain** students who are **underrepresented** within the professions of OT, PT, SLP, audiology, and respiratory therapy.

Included individuals who are racial or ethnic minorities, from disadvantaged backgrounds, or individuals with a disability.



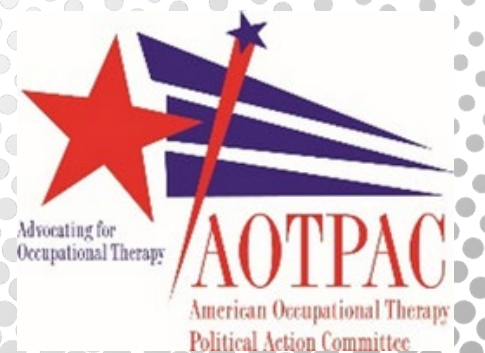
Next steps...



- Funding from Congress.
- Proper implementation from HRSA.

Department of Ed Opportunities

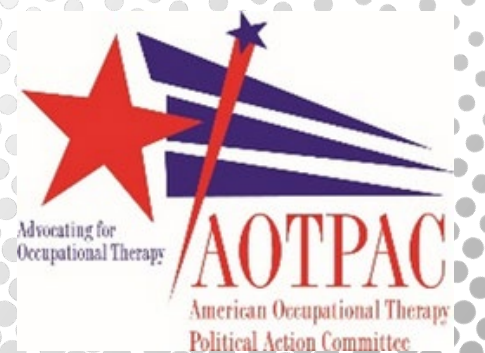
- Medicaid in schools
 - New Medicaid joint CMS/ED guidance.
 - Technical assistance center.
 - \$40 million grant to help states expand services.
- Mental Health Service Professional (MHSP) Demonstration Grant Program Funding
 - 2 OT programs received school mental health workforce funding totaling almost \$10 million!



Medicare Home Health Accessibility Act

Success!

AOTA advocated for passage of legislation
that was passed in 2020 to
allow OTs to open Medicare home health cases
as of January 1, 2022.



Next
steps...

Establish OT as a
Medicare home health
qualifying benefit



OT could be ordered as a solo service.
Now, nursing, PT or SLP must also be
on order.

Champions @ work for OT

House Ways and Means Hearing:

March 12, 2024

Rep. Lloyd Smucker:

“This bill will make sure that seniors
can receive the care that helps them manage
their activities of daily living and thrive in their
homes.”

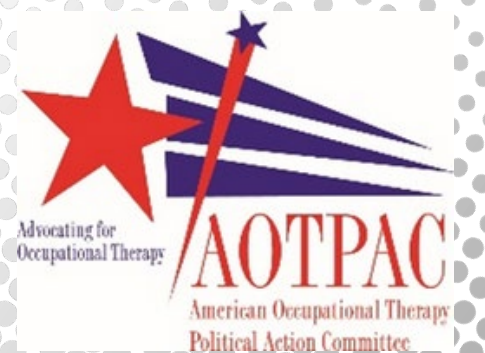


EMPOWER Act – Supporting OTAs

- **Advocacy success!** – CMS has renewed current flexibility for OTA “direct” supervision to be met by a availability of supervising OT by A/V technology
- Change the Medicare supervision requirement for OTAs and PTAs in private practice so that it cannot exceed the requirements under State law.
- Require the GAO to study the impact of the 15% payment reduction on access to therapy services in rural and underserved areas.

Senator John Barrasso (R- WY) and Senator Tom Carper (D- DE)

Rep. Deb Lesko (R- AZ) and Rep. Annie Kuster (D- NH)



Medicare Part B Payment Cuts

Payment cuts to therapy services

OT reimbursement is not keeping up with costs of doing
business

This trend has increased since 2021 because of
big changes in the Medicare Physician Fee Schedule

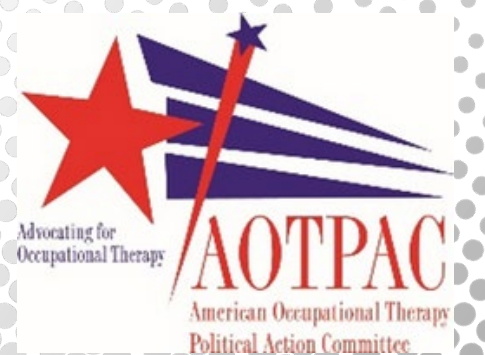
Medicare Part B Payment Cuts

Congress Set to Decrease Cuts to 2024 Medicare Fee Schedule

Heather Parsons 03/08/2024

Congress is poised to pass legislation that will reduce cuts to the Medicare Physician Fee Schedule (MPFS) which took effect on January 1. The legislation increases the MPFS by 1.68% and extends several expiring Medicare policies in addition to funding multiple Federal government agencies.

Calculations by the American Medical Association indicated that total cuts to occupational therapy services for 2024 were 3.1% before passage of this legislation – slightly less than the cuts to the overall Fee schedule which were 3.4%. With passage of this legislation, occupational therapy claims processed after March 9 will instead be cut by an average of 1.42% compared to payments for these services in 2023.



Next steps...



Policy Principles for Outpatient Therapy Reform under the Medicare Physician Fee Schedule

As Congress begins to consider ways to reform the Medicare Physician Fee Schedule, the below policy principles seek to address long-standing challenges faced by outpatient therapy providers. Over the last three years, therapy providers have received some of the largest cuts of any health care providers as a result of budget neutrality policies. At the same time, therapy providers are subject to legacy reductions to payment for services that date back to the days of the sustainable growth rate formula, excessive administrative costs, and barriers to participation in innovative and value-based programs. Enacting the below policy principles will ensure access to high-quality therapy services now and into the future.

Principle 1: Eliminate a Flawed and Outdated Medicare Payment Policy

The Multiple Procedure Payment Reduction Policy ("MPPR"), was first implemented in 2011 and applies to physical therapy, occupational therapy, and speech language pathology services provided under Medicare Part B. Because of MPPR, when therapists bill more than one "always therapy" service (identified by CPT code) on the same day for the same patient, all therapy services beyond the first are subject to a reduction in the practice expense portion of that code.

Under this policy, the therapy service with the highest practice expense value is reimbursed at 100%, and the practice expense values for all subsequent therapy services, provided by all therapy providers, are reduced by 50%. The work and malpractice components of the therapy service payment are not reduced.

In the 2011 Medicare Physician Fee Schedule, CMS first proposed the implementation of a 25% MPPR across therapy services. Congress reduced this reduction amount to 20% in the Physician Payment and Therapy Relief Act of 2010 (H.R. 5712). This 20% MPPR was in place from January 1, 2011, to March 31, 2013. Without any further analysis demonstrating a need to increase the MPPR, Congress implemented a permanent 50% MPPR in the American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012, which was implemented by CMS on April 1, 2013. The average payment per therapy claim in 2013 (after MPPR) was 8.5% less than the average therapy claim in 2010 (before MPPR).

<https://www.aota.org/-/media/corporate/files/advocacy/federal/hill-day/2023/policy-principles-for-therapy-reform-under-the-mpfs.pdf>



Behavioral Health Legislation



Mental Health
Professionals Workforce
Shortage Loan Repayment
Act (H.R. 4933)

Provides loan forgiveness for mental health professionals practicing in shortage areas, includes occupational therapists.

Senate Committee – Workforce Bill –
August 2023:

Defined occupational therapists as mental health professionals

OT Mental Health
Parity Act

Goal: Clarify to providers and payors that occupational therapy services provided to a person with a mental health or substance use disorder is a covered Medicare service

(services are an allowed, but under-recognized benefit)



Are you happy with this
progress?



Do we have more work
to do?



“It always seems impossible
until it’s done.”

-Nelson Mandela



“Energy and persistence
conquer all things.”

-Benjamin Franklin

LAST YEAR

APTAMEMBERS GAVE:

an average of
\$5.27 per member

Raising \$527,488

AOTAMEMBERS GAVE:

an average of
\$2.52 per member

Raising \$151,407

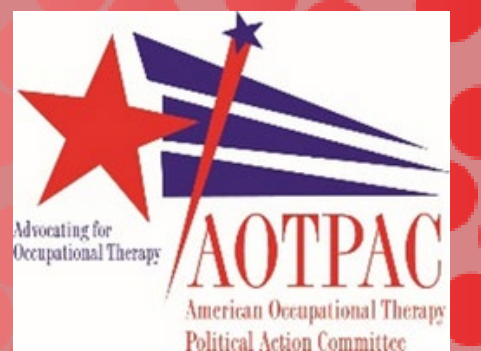


WHERE
DOES
AOTPAC
GET THE
\$\$



AOTPAC can only solicit money from AOTA members

***By law, AOTA cannot give any financial support to a candidate running for office, none of your AOTA membership dues can be used to support political candidates or attend fundraising events



AOTPAC Goals:



To raise money



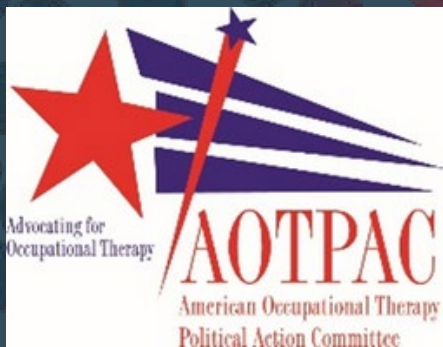
Elect policy makers who
support occupational
therapy at the federal level



To have a positive impact on
policy to enhance
occupational therapy



Put OT in the Spot Light



Putting the FUN in Fundraising

OT Rex pins & a special travel mug



PAC Night

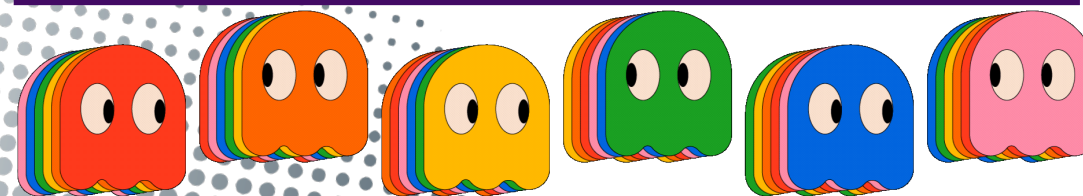
SAT 7:30 - 11PM

Food

DJ

Photo booth

\$50/\$25



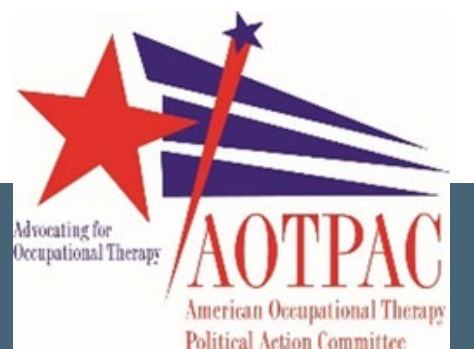
But Wait, there's more!

Do you know about the High Donor Lunch?

- If you contribute a minimum of **\$500** during a calendar year (Chairs Council), you will receive a special invitation to the High Donor

Double Dollar Day Council (\$7,999 annually)

- High Donor Lunch
- Invitation to quarterly conference calls with AOTA's Federal team for an insider's legislative update



Join the Club!!

Capitol Council (\$1,000–\$2,499 annually)

- High Donor Lunch
- Invitation to quarterly conference calls with AOTA's Federal Affairs team for an inside legislative update.
- Plus a gold lapel pin

President's Council (\$2,500–\$5,000 annually)

- High Donor Lunch
- Invitation to quarterly conference calls with AOTA's Federal Affairs team for an inside legislative update.
- A gold lapel pin
- Plus an invitation to an intimate reception with the AOTPAC Board members and the Federal Affairs team at the AOTA INSPIRE Annual Conference (in person)



You are a critical piece of OT advocacy!

Contribute now!

1. Scan
2. Log-in
3. Donate

Or Visit us at the
AOTPAC booth!



Contributions to AOTPAC are voluntary and refusal does not affect an AOTA member's rights. Contributions are not tax deductible as charitable contributions for federal income tax purposes.



Thank
You

