

# Occupational Therapy across Ontario's Health Care System

**In hospitals....** OTs are important members of interprofessional teams in the ER, ICU, acute care, rehabilitation units & out-patient services. OTs are critical for assessing & facilitating functional readiness for discharge, enabling timely, successful transitions to community living.

**In Long-Term Care Homes...** OTs focus on maintaining or restoring ADL function, seating & mobility, dementia care & behaviour management. Resident access to OT services is significantly restricted further to PT Funding Reform. OTs have proposals to restore access.

**In Seniors Care...** OTs are essential members of health professional teams focused on enabling seniors to age successfully at home. Attention to abilities to manage activities of daily living, cognitive function, safe mobility & falls prevention, chronic disease self management, mental health, driving, home safety & accessibility are all key foci of OTs working with seniors.

**In the Home & Community Care System....** OTs' work is perhaps most relevant in the environment in which people live and work. Helping people maintain, restore or achieve abilities to manage the day to day living skills, activities & relationships they need and want to engage in enables Ontarians to live as independently & as engaged as possible in their home, community & life roles. Therapy to restore function, retraining of skills, assessment & prescription of assistive devices, mobility aids or environmental modifications, strategies to support self management, counselling, education, etc. are all part of an OT's toolbox. OTs advocate for a more restorative focus to our home and community care system. We believe a shift from "caring for" to "enabling people to manage" not only reduces the burden of care costs to the system but is also patient-focused, enhancing an individual's autonomy & dignity.

**In Ontario's Auto Insurance System...** OTs provide rehab services to restore a claimant's functional status, enabling return to work & life roles. OTs are assessors of need for attendant care benefits. OTs worry that increasing limits to benefits may preclude full recovery.

**In the Primary Care System...** OTs work in inter-professional teams in Family Health Teams & Community Health Centres (although access to OT is limited), supporting patients across the lifespan to address barriers to occupational performance early to maintain function/prevent disability.

**Serving Children with Special Needs...** OTs work children and their families in Children's Treatment Centres, home care, FHTs, mental health programs and in school health. As waitlists for school health services can exceed 2 years OTs are supportive of the Special Needs Strategy's goals to more effectively coordinate services for children & integrate rehabilitation services.

**In the Mental Health System...** OTs are important mental health professionals who offer a unique focus that promotes skills development & attention to engagement in daily living skills/occupations, employment & participation in community living. Working in mental health centres, ACT Teams, out-patient & community based programs, and family health teams OTs have unique insight into the challenges of living with mental illness. The profession is authorized the controlled act of psychotherapy when it is proclaimed.



Ontario Society of  
Occupational Therapists

For more information about Occupational Therapy  
visit [www.OTOntario.ca](http://www.OTOntario.ca) or contact the Society at  
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