



Occupational Therapy Association of Oregon

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To: Chair Senator Laurie Monnes Anderson

CC: Members of the Senate Committee on Health Care

I am writing to say thank you for the inclusion of occupational therapists in SB 1547, when you're expanding the list of health care providers who can provide medical release to youth athletes who are suspected of having a concussion. I am an Occupational Therapist at an outpatient neurological rehabilitation clinic in Portland, Oregon working with patients with various neurological conditions, including individuals with concussions and brain injuries.

Occupational therapy is an evidence-based practice, rooted in science that helps people return to daily activities through the use of meaningful tasks. Occupational therapy practitioners analyze the impact of individual personal factors, environmental supports and barriers, and components of the task itself including equipment and setup. Concussion specific evaluation and treatment includes neuro-muscular reeducation of the oculomotor system (i.e., relating to the motion and control of the eye), education on the sensory processing and environmental adaptations to better tolerate over stimulating environments, education on improved energy conservation and activity pacing, and cognitive remediation and compensatory strategies.

It is this holistic approach that helps occupational therapy practitioners be qualified to understand the variety of factors that may impact a patient's readiness to return to meaningful activities including school, work, and sport. Clients with post-concussion syndrome who are involved in sports are often times highly motivated to return to sport, which can make subjective report (i.e., patient self-report) of symptoms difficult to translate into objective, observable deficits and skills. However, the trained eyes of an experienced occupational therapist can identify when function declines in controlled, clinic settings which can replicate some of complexities of live-play during an athletic event.

Occupational therapists should be included in discussions regarding concussion rehabilitation and readiness for return to play. Our experience in neurological rehabilitation techniques combined with our holistic approach of interpretation the interdependent impacts of a client's various life roles and occupations, make us qualified to determine readiness for return to play. Thank you for recognizing the value of occupational therapy, and its contribution to helping ensure our youth are well-equipped to safely return to meaningful engagement in sports and play.

Kyla Laraway, MS, OTD, OTR/L
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