Increase Access to Mental Health Services, Including Occupational Therapy: Support the “Mental Health Professionals Workforce Shortage Loan Repayment Act”: HR 2431

Discussion Points

Occupational Therapy in Mental Health
- Occupational therapy practitioners work with clients across the lifespan, including clients with mental health disorders.

- Our education and expertise allow us to address many of the functional, psycho-social, sensory-motor, and cognitive aspects of behavioral health disorders.

- Occupational therapy helps individuals live as independently as possible and to engage in meaningful and productive life roles.

- Barriers to achieving independence for someone who has experienced long-term mental illness can include difficulty with activities of daily living (such as self-care, medication management, etc.), instrumental activities of daily living (community mobility, cooking, grocery shopping, etc.), and the ability to structure their time in a way that promotes positive mental health.

Shortage of Mental Health Practitioners
- According to the National Institute of Mental Health, in 2018 nearly one in five adults in the United States experienced a mental or behavioral health problem.

- At the same time, approximately 105.7 million Americans live in a federally designated mental health professional shortage areas. This is particularly problematic in certain rural areas.

- A 2016 report from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) projected the supply of personnel in selected behavioral and mental health fields to be 250,000 workers short of the projected demand in 2025.

Mental Health Professionals Workforce Shortage Loan Repayment Act (HR 2431)
- Rep. Grace Napolitano (D-CA) and Rep. John Katko (R-NY) introduced HR 2431 to help increase the number of mental health professionals working in underserved areas.

- The bill would provide loan forgiveness to mental health professionals, including occupational therapists, who practice in underserved areas.

- HR 2431 would assure access to timely, appropriate, and effective mental health treatment to help individuals with mental and behavioral health conditions, so they can obtain the services they need to thrive.

Your Ask

Please cosponsor the Mental Health Professionals Workforce Shortage Loan Repayment Act (HR 2431) in the House or support its introduction in the Senate.

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