Support Diversity in Occupational Therapy

Allied Health Workforce Diversity Act of 2019—H.R.3637

Discussion Points

Occupational therapy practitioners support the health and participation of clients through engagement in meaningful occupations (i.e., everyday activities). OTs and OTAs help clients who have experienced (or are at risk for experiencing) illness, injury, or disability to engage in their meaningful roles, habits, and routines, all of which are linked to their culture, background, and experience.

According to a study by the Institute of Medicine, the diversity of the nation’s health care workforce raises concerns. Racial and ethnic minorities largely receive lower quality health care than non-minorities. Overall, increasing diversity will lead to improved access to care, greater patient choice and satisfaction, and better education experience for health professions’ students, among many other benefits.

The Allied Health Workforce Diversity Act (H.R. 3637) increases opportunities for individuals underrepresented in the profession of occupational therapy by providing grant funding directly to college and university programs to provide students with tutoring and mentorships, as well as scholarships and stipends.

This bill is bipartisan and introduced by Reps. Bobby Rush (D-IL) and Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-WA). This legislation provides the Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA) with the flexibility to adapt to changes to which groups are defined as “underrepresented” to reflect changes in the health care workforce.

Your Ask in the House:

Please co-sponsor the Allied Health Workforce Diversity Act (H.R. 3637)

Your Ask in the Senate:

Please support introduction of the Allied Health Workforce Diversity Act