

AGENDA ITEM 4

PUBLIC COMMENT FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA.

Public Comment #1 received via email

Hello,

I hope this finds you doing well. I had the pleasure of meeting with some of your team at the OTAC conference last month and was informed of the pending increase in OT licensing fees. While I am a practicing clinician and able to pay the increased fees, it was brought to my attention that first time applicants are made to pay the same licensing fee (although prorated depending on their birthdate).

These new clinicians are just entering the profession, not yet making money, just coming out of 6 months of unpaid internships after their 2-3 years of grad school, and also made to pay \$500 to sit for the NBCOT exam. Given this combination of factors, many of the students face extreme financial hardship during this time of transition into the profession.

In discussing this with your representative, they suggested the use of temporary licensing to enable students to work as OTs while studying for the NBCOT exam. While this is a viable option for some students, I have also seen many new grads struggle to adjust to their first OT job while also trying to juggle the demands and stress of studying for the NBCOT exam. In the best interests of our clients and new clinicians, it is best to reduce the need for this dual responsibility.

Keeping in mind our dedication to supporting the increased diversity of clinicians in our field, this policy on the initial licensing fee seems to be an area in which we could improve. If we were to reduce the financial burden of entering the profession, we could potentially create a more equitable and supportive environment for new clinicians. As such, I propose significantly lowering the initial licensing fee for new grads and leaving the financial burden of CBOT's expenses to the practicing clinicians.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

C.H., OTR/L

Public Comment #2 received via email

Dear CBOT,

I am writing this letter to express that I strongly do NOT support the increase in licensure fees for new graduates.

Entry-level occupational therapy practitioners should be considered as a different payment category. I am in my third year of practice having graduated in 2019 from San Jose State University. Starting off my occupational therapy career was going significantly expensive (e.g., NBCOT costs for study materials and testing and state licensing fees). Students are highly impacted by the financial burden of the state licensing fees because they typically cannot work full-time as a practitioner to pay for these costs that other full-time practitioners are able to pay for since they have work, and cost is a prohibitive barrier to entering and succeeding in this profession as a new graduate.

If we as a profession want to be more diverse and accessible, increasing licensure fees for new graduates will put up more barriers for individuals who want to become occupational therapists. This will prevent valuable candidates who represent the identities and cultures of our clients from entering our profession.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter. I appreciate your work in supporting the occupational therapy profession.

Sincerely,

E.M., OTR/L