



## PRACTICE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

March 1, 2024

### Committee Members Present

Christine Wietlisbach, OT, Board Member/Chair  
Lynne Andonian, OT  
Richard Bookwalter, OT, Board Member  
Bob Candari, OT  
Mary Kay Gallagher, OT  
Elizabeth Gomes, OT  
Heather Kitching, OT  
Diane Laszlo, OT Retired  
Jeannette Nakamura, OT  
Carlin Daley Reaume, OT  
Chi-Kwan Shea, OT  
Floyd Tran, OT

### Board Staff Present

Heather Martin, Executive Officer  
Jody Quesada Novey, Manager  
Rachael Hutchison, Analyst

### Committee Members Absent

Lynne Andonian, OT (joined late)  
Lynna Do, Board Member  
Ernie Escovedo, OT  
Danielle Meglio, OTA (technical difficulties)

**Friday, March 1, 2024**

### **3:00 pm – Committee Meeting**

*The public may provide comment on any issue before the Board at the time the agenda item is discussed. If public comment is not specifically requested, members of the public should feel free to request an opportunity to comment.*

1. Call to order, roll call, establishment of a quorum.

The meeting was called to order at 3:16 pm, roll was called, and a quorum was established.

2. Chairperson opening remarks.

Chair Christine Wietlisbach thanked all the committee volunteers and members of the public for their attendance at the meeting. Chair Wietlisbach reported the removal of agenda item six because it was completed at a previous meeting and ten because the items delegated were previously prioritized.

3. Introductions by all Committee Members.

All committee members present chose to introduce themselves.

4. Public Comment for Items Not on the Agenda.

Samia Rafeedie and Bryant Edwards chose to introduce themselves.

There were no additional Board member remarks.  
There were no additional public comments.

5. Review and vote on approval of the December 8, 2023, committee meeting minutes.

Elizabeth Gomes asked that “retired” be removed from her name in the minutes as she is still practicing.

- Richard Bookwalter moved to approve the December 8, 2023, Practice Committee meeting minutes as written and directed Board staff to make non-substantive changes.
- Carlin Daley Reaume seconded the motion.

**Board Member Vote**

Christine Wietlisbach	Yes
Richard Bookwalter	Yes
Bob Candari	Yes
Mary Kay Gallagher	Abstain
Elizabeth Gomes	Yes
Heather Kitching	Abstain
Diane Laszlo	Yes
Jeannette Nakamura	Yes
Carlin Daley Reaume	Yes
Chi-Kwan Shea	Yes
Floyd Tran	Yes

The motion carried.

Board staff asked the committee to revisit a public comment handled at the October 13, 2023, committee meeting to decide if the response that staff was asked to deliver would differ since it was discovered that the commenter was not an occupational therapy practitioner but a physical therapist.

*Recap from October 13, 2023, Practice Committee Minutes.*

“The consensus of the committee was that the question was very generic in nature, and they agreed that guidelines cannot be provided for every workplace scenario. Their final recommendation was to remove the item from the purview of the Practice Committee and have staff advise the commenter that they should call upon their knowledge, skills, and abilities along with the protocol of their specific employer.”

Diane Laszlo stated that the fact that the commenter is a physical therapist rather than an occupational therapist did not change her opinion to respond with the same instruction for the commenter to review the laws of the OT profession and consult the administration of the site they work for.

Chair Wietlisbach and Mr. Bookwalter agreed that board staff should still include links to the OT Practice Act in the response.

Carlin Daley Reaume confirmed that her thoughts remained unchanged.

The consensus of the committee was unchanged.

There were no additional Board member remarks.

There were no additional public comments.

6. Consideration and possible recommendation to the Board on whether suture removal is within the occupational therapy scope of practice.

***Removed from the agenda.***

7. Consideration and possible recommendation to the Board on whether advanced practice approval in hand therapy is required to treat carpal tunnel syndrome, repetitive motion injuries, or finger/hand pain, wrist pain or elbow pain that is not due to injury or surgery.

Chairperson Wietlisbach reminded the committee that the legal definition of hand therapy found in Occupational therapy Practice Act Section 2570.2 states it is the art and science of rehabilitation of the hand, wrist or forearm....

California Code of Regulation Section 4150 (f) further defines that rehabilitation refers to occupational therapy services performed as a result of surgery or injury to the hand, wrist, or forearm. Treating chronic or repetitive pain that did not result from an injury or surgery would not be hand therapy but general occupational therapy.

Ms. Daley Reaume questioned from an ergonomic background lens. Her question was reproductive in nature and centered around an injury caused from carrying an infant. Ms. Daley Reaume opined that she saw it as a neutral body mechanics issue and felt that general OTs could/should treat in this situation. Ms. Daley Reaume summed up her comment by saying that with her experience and training if she felt like the situation called for a more specialized treatment that she would refer.

Chair Wietlisbach commented that she felt Ms. Daley Reaume's example was not treating an injury but speaking to good body mechanics.

A robust discussion ensued about the fact that the word "injury" was used in the question from the public commenter along with the topics of ergonomics, repetitive strain injuries, treatment settings, access to care and where a practitioner should draw the line with generalized pain and symptoms and refer to a hand therapist is needed.

Ms. Wietlisbach stated that she believed repetitive strain injuries should be considered an injury.

Diane Laszlo questioned what the impetus of this public comment was.

Executive Officer Heather Martin confirmed that due to her personal conversations with the commenter and their colleagues she informed the committee that the question about treating carpal tunnel came from an employment lens and involved capacity issues. The commenter was hoping that a general occupational therapy practitioner could provide treatment for repetitive strain injuries.

The use of the word "injury" in the question became a point of contention.

The definition of hand therapy says if it involves surgery or injury of the hand, wrist or forearm it should be treated by a hands approved occupational therapist and if it's not then it may be treated by a general occupational therapy practitioner.

The consensus of the committee was to answer with the language of the law. This would entail a definition of hand therapy and if the needed treatment doesn't fall under that definition, then a general practitioner can treat.

There were no additional Board member remarks.

There were no additional public comments.

8. Consideration and possible recommendation to the Board following a review of the ACOTE Guidelines to consider reducing or eliminating advanced practice education and training requirements for students graduating after a certain (TBD) date.

***Due to time constraints, Chair Wietlisbach gave an overview of what would be discussed at the next meeting.***

9. Consideration and possible recommendation to the Board on whether the education and training requirements for licensees demonstrating competence in the advanced practice areas should be reduced.

***Due to time constraints, Chair Wietlisbach gave an overview of what would be discussed at the next meeting.***

10. Committee discussion and prioritization of practice issues delegated by the Board to the Committee for evaluation and possible recommendation(s) to the Board.

***Removed from the agenda.***

11. New suggested agenda items for a future meeting.

Board staff to provide both sets of ACOTE standards for next meeting.  
There were no additional Board member remarks.  
There were no additional public comments.

12. Discussion on scheduling time(s) for future meetings.

The consensus of the committee was to have a Doodle poll sent out for June 17<sup>th</sup> and June 24<sup>th</sup> as possible committee meeting dates.

The meeting adjourned at 4:54 p.m.