

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 7221



Introduced by Representative Divina Grace C. Yu

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The proposal seeks to update the professional regulatory law to govern the practice of occupational therapists in the country. Since 1969, Republic Act 5680: An Act Creating the Board for Physical Therapists and Occupational Therapists has been the basis for its regulation and has never been amended to respond to current global trend and national development.

Occupational Therapy (OT) is a separate and distinct health profession from Physical Therapy (PT) by definition, scope of practice and educational requirements. Occupational Therapy has its own professional association, the Occupational Therapy Association of the Philippines, Inc. (OTAP), now Philippine Academy of Occupational Therapists, Inc., which is recognized by the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) and duly registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC). The organization is well recognized as a full member of the World Federation of Occupational Therapists (WFOT) since 1968.

Upon the implementation of ASEAN MRA's which include health professionals, the already highly marketable Filipino occupational therapists (more than 3000 as of the last OT licensure examination) will be further catapulted to overseas employment. Global demand tempered by national and regional economic constraints, new immigration laws, and international competition is fast requiring more quality in health care professionals, including occupational therapists.

Apart from this concern, there is an increasing and continuing local demand and continued shortage of occupational therapy services due to the increasing prevalence of various developmental disabilities (e.g. Autism, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder & Learning Disabilities) and a burgeoning elderly population. Occupational therapy also has a vital role in disaster preparedness and response as well as with working with those at risk for disabilities (e.g. victims of abuse/neglect, children born prematurely or low-weight at birth, children born to mothers with substance abuse disorder or diseases such as HIV/AIDS).

Most importantly, the current mandate of your service-oriented administration regarding the Philippine Health Agenda, outcome-based education, as well as professional qualifications framework can be considered as major changes that the OT profession needs to respond to.

Accordingly, it is imperative that occupational therapists align regulatory functions and professional standards based on the changing healthcare needs both locally and internationally. Professional standards and competencies among occupational therapists must be globally competitive and at the same time nationally responsive.

In short, the bill simply aims to upgrade and update the competence, knowledge, skills and attitude of the occupational therapists practicing in the Philippines to make them globally competitive, socially responsive, and nationally accessible to Filipino children and persons with disabilities.

In view hereof, approval of this bill is earnestly sought and recommended.



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AN ACT
REGULATING THE REGISTRATION, LICENSURE, AND PRACTICE OF OCCUPATIONAL
THERAPY, PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

ARTICLE I
GENERAL PROVISIONS

1 **SEC. 1. *Short Title of Act.*** – This Act shall be known as “*The Philippine Occupational Therapy Law of*
2 *2018*”.

3
4 **SEC. 2. *Statement of Policy.*** – The State recognizes the importance of occupational therapists in nation
5 building. Hence, it shall develop and nurture competent, virtuous, productive and well-rounded
6 occupational therapists whose standards of practice and service shall be excellent, world class and globally
7 competitive through inviolable, honest, effective and credible licensure examinations and through
8 regulatory measures, programs and activities that foster their continuing professional growth.

9
10 **SEC. 3. *Definition of Terms.*** – As used in this Act, the following terms shall mean:

- 11
12 a.) Occupational therapy - is a client-centered health profession concerned with promoting health
13 and well-being through occupation. The primary goal of occupational therapy is to enable
14 people to participate in the activities of everyday life. Occupational therapists achieve this
15 outcome by working with people and communities to enhance their ability to engage in the
16 occupations they want to, need to, or are expected to do, or by modifying the occupation or the
17 environment to better support their occupational engagement.

1
2 b.) The Scope and Nature of the Practice of Occupational Therapy – shall embrace, but is not
3 limited to, the analysis and application of purposeful and meaningful activities specifically
4 directed to occupational performance in the areas of self-care, work, play, and leisure.
5 Reference to occupation is in the context of the individual’s goal-directed use of time, energy,
6 interest, and attention. Upon referral, occupational therapists interpret and intervene or address
7 problems impeding functional or adaptive performance. The purpose is to prevent limitations
8 in participation, and to promote, maintain, or restore occupational performance, health, and
9 psychosocial wellbeing. Occupational therapy may be part of the health and/or social services
10 in hospitals, community settings such as residential, vocational, and leisure centers, schools,
11 day programs, private agencies, the academe, clinics, the work place and other organizations
12 which provide preventive or health promotive services.
13

14 c.) Occupational Therapist – refers to a person who is a holder of a valid registration and
15 professional license issued by the Board of Occupational Therapy and the Professional
16 Regulation Commission, and who is legally qualified to practice occupational therapy in the
17 Philippines pursuant to this Act.
18
19

20 **ARTICLE II**
21 **CREATION OF THE PROFESSIONAL REGULATORY BOARD OF OCCUPATIONAL**
22 **THERAPY**
23

24 **SEC. 4. *Creation and Composition of the Board.*** – Within six months after the enactment of this Act, there
25 is hereby created a Board of Occupational Therapy, hereafter referred to as the Board, under the
26 administrative supervision of the Professional Regulation Commission, hereinafter referred to as the
27 Commission, composed of a chairperson and two (2) members appointed by the President of the Philippines
28 upon the recommendation of the Commission from among occupational therapists of recognized standing
29 nominated by the accredited and integrated professional organization of occupational therapists.
30

31 **SEC. 5. *Powers and Functions of the Board.*** – The Board shall have the following powers and functions:
32

33 a.) Promulgate, administer, and enforce rules and regulations necessary for carrying out the
34 provisions of this Act;

- b.) Supervise and regulate the registration, licensure and practice of occupational therapy in the Philippines;
- c.) Administer oaths in connection with the administration of this Act;
- d.) Adopt an official seal of the Board;
- e.) Maintain a roster of occupational therapists indicating therein the basic information about the registered professionals;
- f.) Issue, reinstate, suspend, or revoke the registration and license, or cancel special permits for the practice of occupational therapy;
- g.) Study and monitor conditions affecting the practice of occupational therapy and adopt such measures as may be deemed necessary for the enhancement of the profession and maintenance of high professional and ethical standards;
- h.) Ensure, in collaboration with the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) or its equivalent, that all educational institutions offering occupational therapy education comply with the prescribed policies, standards, and guidelines;
- i.) Prescribe the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice for occupational therapists endorsed by the accredited and integrated professional organization of occupational therapists;
- j.) Hear or investigate any violations of this Act, its implementing rules and regulations and the Code of Ethics, and for this purpose, issue *Subpoena duces tecum* to secure the appearance of the witnesses and the production of documents in connection therewith; Provided that the decision of the Board shall, unless appealed to the Commission, become final and executory after fifteen (15) days from receipt of judgment or decision;
- k.) Prescribe guidelines and criteria in the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) program for occupational therapists;
- l.) Prescribe the subjects in the licensure examination ***and table of specifications***, determine the syllabi of the subjects and their relative weights, score and the rate examination papers, and submit the results to the Commission within the period provided for in the rules of the Commission;
- m.) Administer the examinations to applicants for the practice of occupational therapy in accordance with the provisions of this Act;
- n.) Adopt a program for the full computerization of the licensure examination;
- o.) Grant registration without examination subject to approval by the Commission;
- p.) Issue special permits to persons admitted to the practice of occupational therapy for a specific duration of time, and certificates of recognition for advanced studies, researches and accomplishments that contribute to the enrichment of the Profession;

q.) Perform such other powers and functions as deemed necessary to carry out the objectives of this Act.

The policies, resolutions, rules and regulations, orders or decisions issued or promulgated by the Board shall be subject to review and approval of the Commission.

SEC. 6. *Qualifications of Board Members.* - The members of the Board shall, at the time of their appointment, possess the following qualifications:

- a.) A resident of the Philippines for at least (5) years;
- b.) A duly registered occupational therapist under this Act, with a valid certificate of registration and professional license;
- c.) Has engaged in rendering occupational therapy services for at least five (5) continuous years immediately preceding appointment;
- d.) A member of good standing of the accredited and integrated professional organization of occupational therapists, and not an officer thereof;
- e.) Has no prior conviction by any competent court, of an offense involving moral turpitude; and
- f.) Has no pecuniary interest, directly or indirectly, in any school, college or university or institution conferring an academic degree necessary for admission to the practice of occupational therapy; or where review classes in preparation for licensure examination are offered or conducted; nor be a member of faculty or administration thereof.

SEC. 7. *Term of Office.* - The members of the Board shall hold office for a term of three (3) years or until their successors have been appointed and duly qualified; *Provided that*, members of the first Board to be appointed after the approval of this Act shall hold office for the following terms: the chairperson for three years, one member for two years, and the other member for one year; *Provided further* that, a chairperson or member may be re-appointed for a second term, but may not serve more than two consecutive three-year terms or six consecutive years. Interim vacancies shall be filled for the unexpired term only.

SEC. 8. *Removal of Board Members.* - Any member of the Board, may, upon the recommendation of the Commission after due process of law and investigation conducted by the Commission, be suspended or removed by the President from office for cause such as gross neglect of duty, incompetence, malpractice, unprofessionalism, immorality, unethical or dishonorable conduct, final judgment of crimes involving moral turpitude, and manipulating or rigging of the licensure examination results, disclosure of secret and

1 confidential information in the examination questions prior to the conduct of the said examination, or
2 tampering of grades.

3
4 **SEC. 9. *Compensation and Allowances of the Board.*** – The Chairperson and members of the Board shall
5 receive compensation and allowances comparable to that being received by the chairpersons and members
6 of existing regulatory boards under the Commission as provided for in the General Appropriations Act.

7
8 **SEC. 10. *Supervision of the Board, Custodian of Records, Secretariat, and Support Services.*** – The Board
9 shall be under the administrative supervision of the Commission. All records of the Board, including
10 applications for examination, examination papers and results, minutes of deliberation, administrative cases,
11 and other investigations involving occupational therapists, shall be kept by the Commission.

12 The Commission shall designate the Secretary of the Board and shall provide the secretariat and
13 other support services to implement the provisions of this Act.

14
15 **SEC. 11. *Annual Report.*** – The Board shall, at the close of each calendar year, submit an annual report to
16 the Commission, giving a detailed account of its proceedings and accomplishments during the year and
17 recommending measures to be adopted, with the end in view of upgrading and improving the conditions
18 affecting the practice of occupational therapy in the Philippines.

19 20 **ARTICLE III**

21 **LICENSURE EXAMINATION AND REGISTRATION**

22
23 **SEC. 12. *Examination Required.*** – All applicants for registration for the practice of occupational therapy
24 shall be required to undergo a licensure examination to be given by the Board in such places and dates as
25 the Commission may designate subject to compliance with the requirements prescribed by the Commission.

26
27 **SEC. 13. *Qualifications for Examination.*** – An applicant for the licensure examination for the licensure
28 examination for occupational therapists shall establish to the satisfaction of the Board that the following
29 qualifications are met:

- 30 a.) A citizen of the Philippines or a foreigner whose country has reciprocity agreement with the
31 Philippines;
32 b.) Has not been convicted of an offense involving moral turpitude;

- 1 c.) A graduate of a Bachelor of Science in Occupational Therapy degree or its equivalent degree
2 as determined by the board from a school, college or university in the Philippines or abroad
3 whose occupational therapy program is recognized by the Commission on Higher Education.
4

5 **SEC. 14. Scope of Examination.** – The licensure examination for occupational therapists shall cover the
6 basic sciences and health science foundations integrated into the following domains:
7

8 a.) Occupational Therapy Application I

- 9 1. Occupational Therapy Theories and Frames of Reference
10 2. Growth and Human Development
11 3. Occupational Performance and Behavior Across the Lifespan
12 4. Occupation-based practice

13 b.) Occupational Therapy Applications II

- 14 1. Adult Physical Dysfunction
15 2. Occupational Therapy in Pediatrics
16 3. Occupational Therapy in Geriatrics
17 4. Psychosocial Dysfunction
18 5. Community-based Practice
19

20 c.) Occupational Therapy Applications III

- 21 1. Professional Reasoning and Behavior
22 2. Professional Competence and Ethics
23 3. Organization, Administration and Management
24 4. Research Process
25

26 The Board, subject to approval by the Commission, may revise or exclude any of the subjects or add new
27 ones as the need arises, and may adjust or modify the percentage weight of the subjects.
28

29 **SEC. 15. Ratings in the Examination.** – To be qualified as having passed the licensure examination for
30 occupational therapists, a candidate must have obtained a general average of seventy-five percent (75%),
31 with no grade lower than sixty percent (60%) in any given subject.
32

33 **SEC. 16. Report of Ratings.** – The Board shall submit to the Commission the ratings obtained by each
34 candidate within ten (10) calendar days after the examination, unless extended for just cause.

1
2 **SEC. 17. Issuance of the Certificate of Registration, Professional License, and Professional**
3 **Identification Card.** – Registration and a professional license shall be issued to examinees that pass the
4 licensure examination for occupational therapists subject to payment of fees prescribed by the Commission.
5 The registration and professional license shall bear the signature of the Chairperson of the Commission and
6 the members of the Board, stamped with the official seal, indicating that the person named therein is entitled
7 to practice the profession with all the privileges appurtenant thereto. The registration and license shall
8 remain in full force and effect until revoked or suspended in accordance with this Act.
9

10 **SEC. 18. Initial.** – The initials OTRP which stands for Occupational Therapist Registered Philippines, shall
11 be used following the name of the registered occupational therapist, especially when signing documents
12 pertinent to the practice of the profession.

13 **SEC. 19. Refusal to Register.** – The Board shall not register any successful examinee who has been
14 convicted by a court of competent jurisdiction of any criminal offence involving moral turpitude, or has
15 been found guilty of immoral or dishonorable conduct after investigation by the Board, or has been declared
16 to be of unsound mind. The reason for the refusal shall be set forth in writing.
17

18 **SEC. 20. Reinstatement, Re-issuance or Replacement of Certificate of Registration and Professional**
19 **License.** – Two years after the date of revocation, the Board may, upon application and for reasons deemed
20 proper and sufficient, reinstate any revoked certificate of registration or professional license, and in so
21 doing, may, in its discretion, exempt the applicant from taking another examination.
22

23 A new certificate of registration, professional license, or special permit, to replace lost, destroyed, or
24 mutilated ones, may be issued subject to the rules as implemented by the Board.
25

26 **SEC. 21. Oath of Occupational Therapists.** – Successful examinees qualified for registration, and qualified
27 applicants for registration without examination, shall be required to take an oath of profession before any
28 member of the Board or any government official authorized by the Commission to administer oaths, prior
29 to entering into the practice of occupational therapy in the Philippines.
30

31 **SEC. 22. Indication of Licensure and Privilege Tax Receipt.** – The occupational therapist shall be required
32 to indicate his/her registration/professional license number and date of issuance, the duration of validity,

1 including the privilege tax receipt number on the document he/she signs, uses or issues in connection with
2 the practice of his/her profession.

3
4 **SEC. 23. *Revocation or Suspension of the Certificate of Registration and Cancellation of Special Permit.***

5 – The Board may, after giving proper notice of hearing to the party concerned, revoke the practitioner's
6 certificate of registration and professional license, or be suspended from the practice of the profession; or
7 cancel the special permit for any of the causes or grounds mentioned in Section 25 of this Act or for any
8 unprofessional or unethical conduct, malpractice, violation of any of the provisions of this Act, its rules and
9 regulations, the Code of Ethics, and Standards of Practice for occupational therapists.

10
11 **SEC. 24. *Roster of Occupational Therapists.*** – The Board shall prepare, update and maintain a roster of
12 occupational therapists which shall contain the name of each registered occupational therapist, his residence
13 and office addresses, the date of registration and issuance of certificates, and other data which the Board
14 may deem pertinent. The roster shall be open to the public, copies of which shall be mailed to each person
15 listed therein.

16 **SEC. 25. *Issuance of Special and Temporary Permit.*** – Special or temporary permits upon
17 recommendation of the accredited and integrated professional organization of occupational therapists may
18 be issued by the Board subject to the approval by the Commission and payment of the fees the latter has
19 prescribed and charged thereof to the following persons;

- 20 1) Foreign-licensed occupational therapist/s called for consultation or a specified purpose that is
21 deemed essential to the development of the country; provided that, the practice shall be limited
22 only for the particular work being engaged; *Provided further*, that there is no Filipino therapists
23 qualified for such consultation or purpose.
- 24 2) Foreign-licensed occupational therapist/s whose service shall be free and is highly needed in a
25 particular setting;
- 26 3) Foreign-licensed occupational therapist/s engaged as professor, lecturer, or critic in fields essential
27 to occupational therapy education in the Philippines, whose engagement is limited to teaching
28 only; and
- 29 4) Foreign-licensed occupational therapist recognized as an expert or specialist whose service is
30 deemed essential to the advancement of the profession in the Philippines.

31
32 The permit shall among other things, include these limitations and conditions; for a period of not more than
33 one year subject to renewal, the branch or specialty of occupational therapy, and the specific place of
34 practice such as clinic, hospital, center, school/college/university offering the course of occupational

1 therapy. The Board, subject to the approval by the Commission, shall prescribe rules and regulations on the
2 implementation of this particular section.

3
4 **ARTICLE IV**
5 **PRACTICE OF OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY**
6

7 **SEC. 26. *Prohibition on the Practice of Occupational Therapy.*** – No person shall practice or offer to
8 practice occupational therapy, nor offer to be an occupational therapist, or use the title, word, letter, figure,
9 or any sign tending to convey the impression of being an occupational therapist, nor advertise or indicate
10 in any manner whatsoever to be qualified to perform the work of an occupational therapist without passing
11 the licensure examination given by the Board, except as otherwise provided in this Act.

12
13 **SEC. 27. *Prohibited Acts.*** – No person shall:

- 14 a.) Engage in the practice of occupational therapy by representing himself/herself as an
15 occupational therapist without a valid registration, professional license, or a valid temporary/
16 special permit granted by the Board pursuant to this Act.
- 17 b.) Represent to be an occupational therapist during the time that his/ her professional license is
18 not valid or that his/her certificate of registration has been suspended or revoked, or that his/her
19 temporary/special permit is cancelled;
- 20 c.) Allow anybody to use his/her certificate of registration/ professional license or temporary/
21 special permit as an occupational therapist to enable such unqualified individual to engage in
22 the practice of occupational therapy;
- 23 d.) Use his/her own the certificate of registration, professional license, or temporary/ special permit
24 of another person.
- 25 e.) Violate any provision of the Code of Ethics as recommended by the accredited international
26 professional organization of occupational therapists.

27 **SEC. 28. *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice for Occupational Therapists.*** – The board shall adopt
28 and promulgate the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice for occupational therapists prescribed and
29 issued by the accredited and integrated professional organization of occupational therapists.

30
31 **SEC. 29. *Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Program.*** – All occupational therapists shall abide
32 by the requirements, rules and regulation on continuing professional development to be promulgated by the
33 PRC Regulatory Board, subject to the approval of the Commission, in coordination with the AIPO for

1 *occupational therapists* or any duly accredited education institutions. For the purpose, a CPD council is
2 hereby created to implement the CPD program.

3
4 **SEC. 30. *Integration of Occupational Therapists.*** – The occupational therapy profession shall be
5 integrated into one (1) national professional organization of occupational therapists that is duly registered
6 with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC). The Board, subject to approval by the *Commission*,
7 shall accredit the said organization as the one and only Accredited Integrated Professional Organization
8 (AIPO) of registered occupational therapists. All *occupational therapists* whose names appear in the
9 Registry Book of Occupational Therapists shall *ipso facto* or automatically become members thereof and
10 shall receive all the benefits and privileges appurtenant thereto upon payment of AIPO membership fees
11 and dues.

12
13 Membership in the Accredited Integrated Professional Organization (AIPO) shall not be a bar to
14 membership in other *occupational therapy* organizations.

15
16 **SEC. 31. *Foreign Reciprocity*** – No foreign occupational therapists shall be given a certificate of
17 registration/professional license and professional identification card or be entitled to any of the privileges
18 under this act unless the country or state of which the foreign occupational therapists is a subject or citizen
19 permits Filipino occupational therapists to practice within its territorial limits on the same basis as the
20 subjects or citizens of said country or state.

21 **ARTICLE V**

22 **PENAL AND MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS**

23
24 **SEC. 32. *Penal Provisions.*** – Any person who shall violate any of the provisions of this Act or any of its
25 implementing rules and regulations as promulgated by the Board, subject to the approval of the
26 Commission, shall upon conviction, be punishable by a fine of not less than Twenty Thousand Pesos (P20,
27 000.00) but not more than Fifty Thousand Pesos (P50,000.00), or by imprisonment for not less than six
28 months, or both, at the discretion of the court.

29
30 **SEC. 33. *Funding Provision.*** – The Chairman of the Professional Regulation Commission shall
31 immediately include in the Commission's program, the implementation of this Act, the funding of which
32 shall be included in the Annual General Appropriations Act.

1 **SEC. 34. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.*** – To implement the provisions of this Act, the Board shall,
2 subject to the approval of the Commission, promulgate the rules and regulations, the Code of Ethics and
3 Standards of Practice for occupational therapists within thirty (30) days after the effectivity of this Act.
4

5 **SEC. 35. *Transitory Provisions.*** – The existing Board of Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy shall
6 continue to function in the interim until such time that the new and separate Professional Regulatory Board
7 of Occupational Therapy shall be constituted pursuant to this Act.
8

9 **SEC. 36. *Separability Clause.*** – If any section or provision of this Act shall be declared invalid or
10 unconstitutional, such shall not invalidate any other section or provision of this Act.
11

12 **SEC. 37. *Repealing Clause.*** – All laws, decrees, orders, issuances or parts thereof which are inconsistent
13 with the provisions of this Act are hereby modified or superseded. Republic Act. No. 5680 is hereby
14 repealed.
15

16 **SEC. 38. *Effectivity.*** – This Act shall take effect after fifteen (15) days following its publication in the
17 Official Gazette or in a major newspaper of national circulation whichever comes earlier.

Approved,