

## STATEMENT

### OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY - PROFESSIONAL AUTONOMY

Occupational therapy is an autonomous health care profession. Occupational therapy (OT) services are determined (designed) only by qualified occupational therapists many of whom are graduates of a World Federation of Occupational Therapists (WFOT) directly approved educational programme. Occupational therapy education may also be a programme approved (accredited) through the auspices of their national occupational therapy professional organisations. These organizations take responsibility for ensuring the WFOT's Minimum Standards for the Education of Occupational Therapists (2002) are met and that the graduates meet competency requirements. In some countries there are external groups which have the responsibility for the accreditation of educational programmes and which use national occupational therapy educational standards in their evaluation process which equal or surpass those of the WFOT.

Occupational therapy professionals are equal members of interdisciplinary health, social and rehabilitation teams and contribute their unique perspective on occupational performance to the decision making on the design of the patient/client service programmes. Occupational therapists use the occupational therapy process to assess their patients/clients, collaborate with them in identifying occupational performance issues, engage them in setting intervention (treatment) goals and strategies and to evaluate outcomes. Occupational therapists work in a variety of institutional settings and community based services.

The recognised voice of the profession in any country is the qualified leadership of the premier national occupational therapy organisation. This national group takes many forms and is determined by the particular country's laws and regulations relating to any group of professionals. The profession through the appropriate organisational level (national, state, provincial or regulatory group) has responsibility to ensure that occupational therapy professionals are competent, abide by accepted codes of conduct and ethics, incorporate professional values in demonstrating responsible and competent behaviour in all forms of practice. Where the national occupational therapy organisation or the equivalent authority (jurisdictional level cited above) has not developed its own professional standards of education or practice, those of the WFOT apply.

The occupational therapy profession endorses life long professional learning, competent, ethical and evidence based practice, with respect and collegiality toward health and other professionals.