

OFFICIAL STATEMENT on the THE CORONAVIRUS DISEASE (COVID-19) SITUATION IN THE PHILIPPINES

17 March 2020

The Board of Directors and Officers of the Philippine Academy of Occupational Therapists, Inc. (PAOT, Inc.), formerly known as the Occupational Therapy Association of the Philippines, Inc. (OTAP), reiterate that we acknowledge the risk of occupational therapists (OTs) and all our stakeholders of contracting the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), and the need to comply with the community quarantine measures as mandated by the Office of the President and various Local Government Units (LGUs).

We recognize that the Memorandum from the Executive Secretary dated 16 March 2020 imposes an enhanced community quarantine and stringent social distancing measures over the entire Luzon which requires everyone to follow strict home quarantine measures. We recognize further that several LGUs outside Luzon have already imposed community quarantine over their localities. Notwithstanding the changing directives from our national and local authorities in response to the COVID-19 situation, as citizens of the country in the allied health field, occupational therapists are indeed bound to comply with quarantine protocols, and with preventive and social distancing measures to aid in the containment of COVID-19 while at the same time expected to reflect on how quality services are to be delivered given the restrictions that everyone is having.

Accordingly, we reiterate our call¹ to our fellow occupational therapists ***to adopt safe, alternative and innovative means of occupational therapy service provision beyond direct face-to-face sessions compliant with the Occupational Therapy Standards of Practice² and Occupational Therapy Code of Ethics³ of PAOT, Inc.*** in continuing the delivery of services to those that they already serve. For occupational therapists working in the hospital setting who are duty-bound to provide direct face-to-face sessions, we strongly urge ***strict compliance with the stringent preventive and social distancing measures in the discharge of their functions while likewise adhering to said professional standards and code of ethics.***

In addition, we reiterate our recommendation to occupational therapists to promote health & well-being, to mediate in the redesign of one's routines, lifestyle, & role assumption, to address the inevitable psychosocial and mental health concerns, and to promote occupational justice of our fellow Filipinos who might be affected by this public health emergency through the provision of safe and innovative interventions. For OTs working as educators, we once again emphasize our call to come up with alternative teaching-learning strategies to maximize the education of future Filipino OTs. Then again, adherence to said standards, code, measures and protocols must be strictly observed in any intervention or strategy that will be employed despite the challenging situation we are in.

We hope that the commitment of the Filipino occupational therapists to continuously facilitate the occupational performance of all our clients will not waver amidst the difficult circumstances.

PARA SA PROPESYON. PARA SA BAYAN.
Board of Directors
Philippine Academy of Occupational Therapists, Inc.

¹ Philippine Academy of Occupational Therapists, Inc. (PAOT, Inc.). (2020). Official Statement on the Proclamation No. 922 Declaring a State of Public Health Emergency throughout the Philippines and the Memorandum from the Executive Secretary on Stringent Social Distancing Measures and Further Guidelines for the Management of the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Situation.

² Philippine Academy of Occupational Therapists, Inc. (PAOT, Inc.). (1998). Occupational Therapy Standards of Practice.

³ Philippine Academy of Occupational Therapists (PAOT). (1998). Occupational Therapy Code of Ethics.