



## **PRACTICE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

**June 21, 2024**

### Committee Members Present

Christine Wietlisbach (Chair)  
Lynne Andonian  
Richard Bookwalter  
Ernie Escovedo  
Mary Kay Gallagher  
Elizabeth Gomes  
Heather Kitching  
Diane Laszlo  
Danielle Meglio  
Jeannette Nakamura  
Carlin Daley Reaume

### Board Staff Present

Heather Martin, Executive Officer  
Jody Quesada Novey, Manager  
Demetre' Montue - Analyst

### Committee Members Absent

Bob Candari  
Lynna Do  
Chi-Kwan Shea

**Friday, June 21, 2024**

**2:00 pm – Committee Meeting**

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

The meeting was called to order at 2:07 pm, roll was called, and a quorum was established.

2. Chairperson opening remarks.

Chair Christine Wietlisbach thanked the committee volunteers and members of the public for their attendance at the meeting.

3. Public Comment for Items Not on the Agenda.

There were no public comments for items not on the agenda.

4. Review and vote on approval of the March 1, 2024, committee meeting minutes.

Heather Kitching asked that her name be added to page one of the minutes under the 'Committee Members Present' heading.

- Heather Kitching moved to approve the March 1, 2024, Practice Committee meeting minutes with her suggested edit and directed Board staff to make any non-substantive changes.
- Diane Laszlo seconded the motion.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

**Board Member Vote**

Christine Wietlisbach	Yes
Lynne Andonian	Yes
Richard Bookwalter	Yes
Ernie Escovedo	Yes
Mary Kay Gallagher	Yes
Elizabeth Gomes	Yes
Heather Kitching	Yes
Diane Laszlo	Yes
Danielle Meglio	Yes
Jeannette Nakamura	Yes
Carlin Daley Reaume	Yes

**The motion carried.**

5. Consideration and possible recommendation to the Board, following a review of the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) Guidelines, to consider reducing or eliminating advanced practice (AP) education and training requirements for students graduating after a certain (TBD) date.

Chair Christine Wietlisbach shared that the committee would most likely only have time to work on agenda item five. She stated that she and Executive Officer Heather Martin put together an evolution of the ACOTE guidelines document to assist the committee members with a visual of how the ACOTE guidelines have evolved pertaining to Physical Agent Modalities (PAMs). The committee would use this document, current ACOTE guidelines effective in 2020 and guidelines which will become effective in 2025 as source documents.

Chair Wietlisbach and Diane Laszlo reminded all that Occupational Therapy (OT) licensing was effective January 1, 2001, but due to the Physical Therapy Associations' tremendous opposition, and belief that there weren't minimum national education standards in the areas of Dysphagia, use of PAMs and Hand Therapy, a caveat was put into place to satisfy these concerns and still grant licensure for occupational therapy practitioners. The caveat included required advanced training in the aforementioned areas in order to practice those skills following graduation and that this requirement would be outlined in the laws and regulations of the OT profession.

An overview of the ACOTE evolution document pertaining to PAMs was given by Ms. Martin and Chair Wietlisbach.

2008 – The minimum education requirement switched from a Bachelor’s to a Master’s degree. The language pertaining to PAMs stated in part, “Demonstrate safe and effective application of superficial thermal...”

This language was followed with the following clarification “The word Demonstrate does not require that a student actually performs the task to verify knowledge and understanding.”

2013 – The language pertaining to PAMs stated in part, “Demonstrate safe and effective application of superficial thermal...”

This language was followed with the following clarification “The word Demonstrate does not require that a student actually performs the task to verify knowledge and understanding.”

2018 - (effective July 2020) The language pertaining to PAMs stated in part, “Demonstrate knowledge and use of the safe and effective application of superficial thermal agents, deep thermal agents, electrotherapeutic agents, and mechanical devices as a preparatory measure to improve occupational performance. This must include indications, contraindications, and precautions.”

Chair Wietlisbach stated that in her opinion this version of the ACOTE standards is the strongest regarding PAMs. Not only must the graduate have knowledge of PAMs, but it is the first version that the graduate must demonstrate that they can safely and effectively use PAMs.

2023 – (effective July 2025), The language pertaining to PAMs stated in part, “Demonstrate use and knowledge of the safe and effective application of superficial thermal agents, deep thermal agents, electrotherapeutic agents, and mechanical devices as a preparatory measure to improve occupational performance. This must include indications, contraindications, and precautions.”

Chair Wietlisbach stated that this version remains a very strong standard and is almost identical to the 2018 standards. It is her opinion that an argument to remove the AP PAMs requirements could safely include OT graduates that began programs under the 2018 ACOTE guidelines.

Ms. Laszlo asked if legislation would be needed and questioned whether it would be better to wait and include Dysphagia and Hand Therapy in the committee’s recommendation.

Mr. Bookwalter agreed with Chair Wietlisbach regarding PAMs. He felt that the minimum national education standards have met the mark and he does not wish to overregulate.

Jeanette Nakamura asked what in the curriculum had changed regarding PAMs.

Ms. Wietlisbach stated that although she does not teach PAMs she is aware that clinical reasoning, safe use of machines and physiological response on the tissue(s)

being treated are taught. The students demonstrate use of the equipment and test. The students are getting entry level knowledge at the schools.

Carlin Daley-Reaume thanked Chair Wietlisbach and Executive Officer Heather Martin for the ACOTE evolution document. She believed the current ACOTE standards meet the required standards related to PAMs and she supports moving forward with a recommendation to the Board on this topic.

Ms. Daley-Reaume stated that ACOTE is the accrediting body that is in charge of academic standards thus they should not be the committee's focus.

Ernie Escovedo stated that he has been PAMs approved since it was first required. He teaches PAMs and very often to post graduate classes. Although he would like to see the AP requirements removed, he is not yet comfortable with the overall proficiency of the majority; it seems inconsistent in his opinion, and he is not comfortable when it comes to consumer safety.

Diane Laszlo said that she is on both sides of the fence, and it is her opinion that it is up to the student and the employer to ensure competency. She is in favor of accepting the ACOTE standards and moving forward with a recommendation to the Board.

Heather Kitching stated that she concurred with Ms. Daley-Reaume and Ms. Laszlo's opinions. The OT degree is a generalist degree and that requires the practitioner hold themselves accountable for working within the scope of practice.

Ms. Kitching said that it is her argument that multiple areas of OT present the same consumer safety risks but are successfully managed through the grassroots competency oversight and ACOTE's role.

Mr. Bookwalter agrees with the majority of the committee member comments. He agreed that a graduate who began their occupational therapy program under the 2018 ACOTE guidelines is going to have a higher level of knowledge and background in PAMs than a graduate from many years ago when the ACOTE standards were not explicit.

Lynne Andonian concurred with the previous committee members. She felt that the ACOTE standards did a really good job.

Chair Wietlisbach agreed that not only is there ACOTE standards to rely on but the NBCOT exam is based on those standards and there are PAMs questions included on the exam. She is of the opinion that the standards are now meeting that minimum level of knowledge for at least PAMs which is the only AP being discussed at the meeting.

Mr. Escovedo offered that in hearing Mr. Bookwalter's comment that the assumption is dependent upon the date of graduation, an entry level therapist would have AP skills coming out of school and this helped him to see the PAMs situation differently.

Ms. Martin commented that it is her belief that the committee must evaluate which version of the ACOTE guidelines justifies the OT program entry date (tbd) as the first

group of graduates that won't be required to provide proof of additional supervised training hours and education in order to provide PAMs.

Chair Wietlisbach summarized that the committee would choose the version of the ACOTE standards that is strong enough to satisfy that the minimum standards in PAMs has been met and it would be those graduates that entered a program underneath those ACOTE standards that would be exempt from additional supervised training hours and education.

Mr. Escovedo questioned what would happen to those who graduated prior to the tbd date.

Chair Wietlisbach clarified that proof of additional supervised training hours and education would still be required.

### Public Comment

Sharon Pavlovich commented that it was her opinion that although the 2018 (effective 7/2020) and 2023 (effective 7/2025) ACOTE standards are relatively the same regarding minimum standards pertaining to PAMs. She felt that choosing the 2025 start date to exempt additional supervised training hours and education for PAMs would be a better choice. Ms. Pavlovich commented that it is her experience in speaking with other educators that additions have been made and continue to be made to the PAMs programs and she believed that a 7/2025 date would be a solid suggestion pertaining to all OT programs being on board.

Chair Wietlisbach commented that what is hard evidence is what is in the ACOTE standards, so it was her opinion that the 2023 standards wouldn't bring any additional measure of safety to the consumer than the 2018 ACOTE standards.

Diane Laszlo agreed with Ms. Wietlisbach.

Executive Officer Heather Martin clarified that the 2018 ACOTE standards went into effect in 7/2020 and the 2023 ACOTE standards will go into effect in 7/2025.

Chair Wietlisbach clarified that the choice should include 2018 or 2023 ACOTE standards.

- Diane Laszlo moved to recommend to the Board consideration for accepting the 2018 ACOTE standards for PAMs and use those standards as a basis for reconsidering the advanced practice standards for PAMs.
- Richard Bookwalter seconded the motion.

### Public Comment

There were no public comments.

**Board Member Vote**

Christine Wietlisbach	Yes
Lynne Andonian	Yes
Richard Bookwalter	Yes
Ernie Escovedo	Yes
Mary Kay Gallagher	Yes
Elizabeth Gomes	Yes
Heather Kitching	Yes
Diane Laszlo	Yes
Danielle Meglio	Yes
Jeannette Nakamura	Yes
Carlin Daley Reaume	Yes

The motion carried.

6. 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.

Ernie Escovedo asked if the committee could revisit lowering the supervision hours needed for PAMs approval.

Chair Wietlisbach and Diane Laszlo agreed that it would be a huge benefit to lower the required training hours.

Richard Bookwalter stated that he felt a valid argument geared toward lowering the supervision hours would be that only practitioners that are affluent and can afford the additional education are going to get approved which reduces access to consumers.

Jeanette Nakamura agreed that the amount and cost limits the number of approved practitioners. She is a neurotherapist and there is a very small number of neuro OTs that are PAMs approved because it is not something they do every day and is difficult to obtain the 240 hours needed for approval so many choose not to pursue PAMs approval. It limits what care you can provide to the neuro population.

Mr. Bookwalter commented that a patient that needs a physical agent modality as an adjunctive or preparatory part of their treatment would suffer in that they would not receive the full benefit of what an OT can offer.

Ms. Martin commented that if you broke the required PAMs training into 15-minute treatments it would equal 960 treatment visits and that leads to the question of whether it should take 960 visits of anything to demonstrate entry level competence. Physical Therapy Assistants use PAMs following initial licensure.

Mr. Bookwalter added that currently a consumer can purchase a hot pack at the store, heat it in their microwave, place it on their neck and burn themselves because they have no

guidance. The more people you have that have information on how to do this safely, protects the consumer.

Chair Wietlisbach asked if anyone on the committee was opposed to reducing the supervision hours required for PAMs.

There was no opposition.

- Ernie Escovedo moved to recommend to the Board reducing the PAMs supervised clinical hours.
- Jeanette Nakamura seconded the motion.

#### Public Comment

There were no public comments.

#### **Board Member Vote**

Christine Wietlisbach	Yes
Lynne Andonian	Yes
Richard Bookwalter	Yes
Ernie Escovedo	Yes
Mary Kay Gallagher	Yes
Elizabeth Gomes	Yes
Heather Kitching	Yes
Diane Laszlo	Yes
Danielle Meglio	Yes
Jeannette Nakamura	Yes
Carlin Daley Reaume	Yes

The motion carried.

Chair Wietlisbach asked if any committee member(s) had input on how many PAMs supervision hours would ensure continued public safety and should be recommended to the Board for consideration.

- Ernie Escovedo moved to recommend to the Board reducing the required PAMs supervised clinical hours from 240 hours to 40 hours.
- Diane Laszlo seconded the motion.

#### Public Comment

There were no public comments.

**Board Member Vote**

Christine Wietlisbach	Yes
Lynne Andonian	Yes
Richard Bookwalter	Yes
Ernie Escovedo	Yes
Mary Kay Gallagher	Yes
Elizabeth Gomes	Yes
Heather Kitching	Yes
Diane Laszlo	Yes
Danielle Meglio	Yes
Jeannette Nakamura	Yes
Carlin Daley Reaume	Yes

The motion carried.

7. New suggested agenda items for a future meeting.

There were no new suggested agenda items for a future meeting.

**Meeting adjournment.**

**The meeting was adjourned at 3:55 pm**