



### **Obama Care (Affordable Healthcare Act) and Fieldwork Education**

*Pamela A Kasyan-Howe, MS, OTR/L, FLOTEC Chairperson, FOTA Fieldwork SIS, South University, WPB AFWC From the Fieldwork SIS*

For each of you who educate

Occupational Therapy and Occupational Therapy Assistant students- Thank-you from FLOTEC. Fieldwork Educators are directly linked to our ongoing success as a profession, and, in my opinion, the most vital link in increasing the merit of our profession. In the ebbs and flow of healthcare we are currently on the precipice of another change, and we are in need of skilled fieldwork educators to provide expert mentorship to our entry level practitioners.

On April 1, 2014, we learned about the success of the Affordable Health Care Act (ACA). As reported in the news, over 7.1 million uninsured and under insured people signed up for health care plans. Regardless of your political beliefs, or comprehension regarding specific implications of ACA, that is ALOT of people who now carry insurance. The passage of ACA provides protection to people with disabilities, pre-existing conditions, and chronic conditions. Out of pocket maximums have been capped, and there are no limits on lifetime services. It is expected that these regulations will allow clients who have chronic conditions to receive services over their lifespan, cover services after a specified deductible is met, and allow access to our services for longer periods of time. Although it goes beyond the scope of this article the potential opportunities created for many populations of people we serve is exciting for our profession!

Now I would also like to take a moment to thank all the practitioners who provide on-going support to AOTA. Your support provided AOTA the resources to effectively lobby for inclusion of rehabilitation and habilitation as an essential health benefit. It is likely that the addition of habilitation, which is intervention directly related to developing independence in ADL's, will result in greater need for OT services. These OT programs will be in traditional and wellness models of service delivery. Therefore, in the near future, many of the clients we serve who have had OT services limited, will now be able to receive intervention as needed for their health.

There has been an identified gap between the potential number of people who need OT services and the number of OT practitioners. ACA could have widened this gap further. Academic programs are developing to try to meet this expected need. But, we will all need to work together to increase both the number and quality of occupational therapy practitioner. What can you do you ask?? Consider educating a student. They are the future providers for those who benefit from our service.

If you are like the majority of OT practitioners, and you love and are passionate about our profession, enjoy working with your current chosen population pass your skills onto the future practitioners.

### **New Residency Program Offers Unique Opportunity for Occupational Therapists**



*Julie Watson, MHS, OTR/L  
Northeast Florida FOTA Regional Representative*

Many occupational therapists in Florida may not be aware that there is a unique opportunity for geriatric and neuro specialization right here in our own backyard. In

July of 2010 Brooks Rehabilitation, a Jacksonville, FL based non-profit organization, in collaboration with the University of North Florida, developed a multidisciplinary Geriatric Residency Program. It is the first program of its kind in the nation and offers a great opportunity for occupational therapists in our state. Recently, the Neuro Residency Program, previously only inclusive of physical therapists, also became multidisciplinary.

The Geriatric and Neuro Residency Programs are one year in length. These unique programs prepare Residents to be leaders in the profession, mentors in the field, clinical consultants, and contributors to evidence based practice. For occupational therapists specifically, the program prepares them to successfully build a portfolio to become Board Certified by the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA).

According to AOTA there are only 12 occupational therapists in the country who are Board Certified in Gerontology and only one in Florida. Another exciting feature of Geriatric Residency Program is the opportunity to earn non-degree graduate credit from Colorado State Applications are due by March 15<sup>th</sup> each year. Interested occupational therapists can visit the program website at <http://www.brooksihl.org/programs/> or contact Robert Rowe, Director of Clinical Education for Brooks Rehabilitation at [Robert.Rowe@Brooksrehab.org](mailto:Robert.Rowe@Brooksrehab.org) for more information.

