

Correspondence – American Occupational Therapy Association

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The American
Occupational Therapy
Association, Inc.

August 19, 1974

Governor Jimmy Carter
1974 Campaign Chairman
Democratic National Committee
P.O. Box 1524
Atlanta, Georgia 30301

Dear Governor Carter:

I received your letter of July 24, and am pleased that the Democratic National Committee is interested in our viewpoints on issues of national concern. As with many health professions, our major concern is client-oriented, that is assuring the most adequate quality health care possible for the most number of people. With this in mind, it is easy to identify a number of particular issues which need to be addressed regarding health care and the health care delivery system.

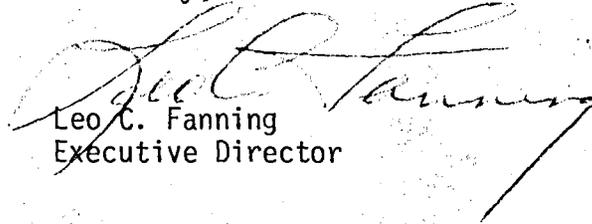
A primary concern is the adoption of a comprehensive national health insurance program. Such a program should make quality health services available to all Americans and should emphasize prevention and early diagnosis of disease or disability, as well as treatment of existing medical conditions. Furthermore, in order to reduce costs and insure quality care, a national health insurance program should utilize the expertise of all health professionals according to patient needs. One example of poor utilization of health personnel is apparent in the Medicare program. While the Medicare law recognizes the need for occupational therapy services in in-patient settings, Medicare only permits occupational therapy services in the patient's home when a service such as nursing, physical therapy or speech therapy is also required. Many people need the unique services offered by occupational therapists without necessarily requiring the services of another profession. We are supporting a bill (HR 3153) which will rectify this misuse of Medicare funds and health personnel.

Another issue of concern to occupational therapists and other health professionals is that demand for services continues to exceed supply of qualified personnel. In order to balance supply and demand without sacrificing quality, we feel that at least two steps must be taken. First, the Department of Health, Education and Welfare should continue to cooperate with professional groups in developing national proficiency standards for the health professions, with the ultimate goal of initiating nationwide certification of health professionals. This would help to insure that providers of health services are at least minimally competent to render quality care. Second, personnel must be trained in a number sufficient to meet the consumer demand for their services. This will require a substantial increase in government funding of

research, training and education programs.

These are some of the issues with which occupational therapists are concerned. If you would like to have more information, we would be happy to talk with you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Leo C. Fanning", written in dark ink over the typed name.

Leo C. Fanning
Executive Director