

Referral Guide: Occupational Therapy

What they do, how they can help with your patients

Summary:

Occupational Therapy (OT) is a client-centred health profession concerned with promoting health and wellbeing through occupation. The primary goal of OT is to enable people to participate in activities of everyday life. OTs work with people & communities to enhance their ability to engage in the occupations they want to, need to, or are expected to, or by modifying the occupation or the environment to better support their occupational engagement. (WFOT 2012)

Primary Care Network (PCN) OTs work with adult patients with mild to moderate functional concerns to address barriers to participation in meaningful activities, thereby restoring/supporting function, decreasing disability, enhancing quality of life, and supporting their health and wellbeing. Barriers may result from injury, illness, disability, or physical and/or social environmental circumstances.

PCN OT Inclusion Criteria:

- PCN Interprofessional Team (IPT) Admission Criteria
AND
- Mild to Moderate medical condition and/or functional impairment impacting participation in meaningful activities.
- Patient is willing and able to actively engage in an OT program (e.g., cognitively, emotionally, physically).
- Patient has goals related to participation in meaningful activities.
- All patients accepted for PCN OT Services consent to engage in a comprehensive initial assessment, including additional targeted assessments, as needed, and a therapeutic OT program.

Reasons For OT Referral

Functional impairment creating barriers to participating in meaningful activities & roles

○ **Examples of Mild-Moderate conditions impacting function including:**

- Chronic Pain (i.e., pain for longer than 6 months)
- Chronic Fatigue (i.e. persistent fatigue for 6 months or more)
- Chronic Insomnia
- Mental Health: depression, anxiety
- Neurologic: Acquired Brain Injury (e.g., concussion etc.) >1year
- Mild Cognitive Impairment
- Frail elderly (Clinical Frailty Scale, version 2, score 1-4)
- Neurodivergence: Autism, ADHD
- Other chronic conditions may include diabetes, obesity, heart failure, etc.

PCN OT Interventions Examples

- **PCN OT SERVICES FOCUS ON PROMOTING PARTICIPATION & FUNCTION THROUGH:**
 - Health Promotion
 - Quality of Life promotion
 - Health literacy
 - Chronic Disease Self-Management
- **CLINIC-BASED INTERVENTIONS MAY INCLUDE:**
 - Remediation, compensation, lifestyle modification
 - Engagement in meaningful activities: self-care, community accessibility & integration, leisure
 - Self-management education to minimize impact of health issues on function and/or prevent secondary complications.
 - Skill development
 - Behavioural strategies
 - Sleep hygiene
 - Energy conservation
 - Relaxation techniques
 - Environmental optimization
- Future planning: e.g., aging in place
- Referrals to other PCN team members, other public or private services

VANCOUVER PRIMARY CARE NETWORKS

PCN OT Exclusion Criteria:

- **PATIENT DOES NOT MEET PCN IPT ADMISSION CRITERIA, AND**
- **THIRD PARTY FUNDING:** Patient has active or recent 3rd party funding for the same issue (e.g., ICBC, WorkSafeBC)
- **PHYSIOTHERAPY SERVICE NEEDS:** Patient has gait/ambulation concerns, needs a mobility aid/optimal device set-up (e.g., walker), and/or an exercise program.
- **ACUTE ILLNESS OR INJURY:** Patient needs are more urgent and related to an acute illness or injury.
- **FUNDING APPLICATIONS:** Patient only requires support with a new funding service application, e.g., Ministry (MSDPR)
- **ERGONOMIC SERVICES:** Patient needs a workplace assessment, including home office workspaces.
- **RETURN-TO-WORK SERVICES:** Patient needs a Job Demands Analysis, Functional Capacity Evaluation (FCE), Assessment for capacity to RTW, Gradual Return-to-Work (GRTW), or Job exploration/replacement, etc.
- **DRIVING SERVICES:** Patient needs a Fitness to Drive assessment, Driver Rehabilitation, CarFit etc.
- **SPLINTING SERVICES:** Patient needs an assessment/prescription for off-the-shelf or custom splints/orthoses.
- **COMPLEX MEDICAL CONDITION/FUNCTIONAL PRESENTATION:** Patient requires active rehabilitation or specialty services to meet their goals, (e.g., attached but not attending, waitlisted, or recently completed program). **See table below for appropriate patient care pathways.**

Patient Need (referral reason)	Examples of Speciality Programs	Examples
Patient is already known and/or is connected to other services	Home Health*, HSCL, MHSU, Rehab. centre, private services, etc.	N/A
Urgent services are needed for acute illness or injury, including acute musculoskeletal injuries	Home Health*, Physiotherapy (Home Health, private), outpatient OT and/or PT programs, MHSU	• safety, fractures, falls, frailty, etc. • work related injuries such as back pain, repetitive strain injuries, etc. • walking aids, exercise, or therapy program
Complex needs requiring home visits in the patient's environment(s), including home-bound clients	Home Health*	• palliative, frailty, safety, etc. • home modification, medical equipment, adaptive aids, home support services, etc.
Wheeled mobility needs including manual and/or power wheelchairs or scooter	Home Health*, Outpatient programs	new wheelchair/scooter or existing equipment is not meeting needs.
Complex dysphagia	Home Health SLP, Outpatient Programs	N/A
Moderate to severe mental health needs	MHSU	high risk of harm to self or others

VANCOUVER PRIMARY CARE NETWORKS

Moderate to severe chronic pain	Home Health*, SPH Complex Pain Clinic, Chronic Disease programs	Pain affecting function such as mobility, transfers, self-care etc.
Moderate to severe cognitive impairment	SPH Elder Care Geriatric Clinic, Home Health*	Cognition impacting safety, inability to engage in activities, etc.
Chronic disease requiring active rehabilitation or specialty services	Complex Chronic Diseases Program (CCDP), BC Women's Complex Chronic Disease Program	Complex chronic pain, arthritis, etc. requiring a specialist service
Hand Therapy, including chronic and/or complex arthritis	SPH Hand Therapy Clinic, Mary Pack Arthritis Centre, GF Strong, Outpatient programs	Complex condition requiring a specialist • hand injury (e.g., tendon injury), fractures, arthritis flare-up • splinting, therapy program needed
Neurologic needs requiring active rehabilitation or specialty services	UBC Movement Disorders Clinic, GF Strong (e.g., GF Strong Adult Concussion Services), Holy Family	Parkinson's Disease, Stroke rehabilitation, TBI, Concussion symptoms, MS, pain etc.,
Neurodivergence (Autism, ADHD, etc.) requiring specialty services	HSCL/CLBC, Outpatient programs	Client needs require specialist service

*Connect with Vancouver Central Intake to discuss a Home Health referral @ 604-263-7377