



# Occupational Therapy in Primary Health Care

MNPA Spring Conference, 2011

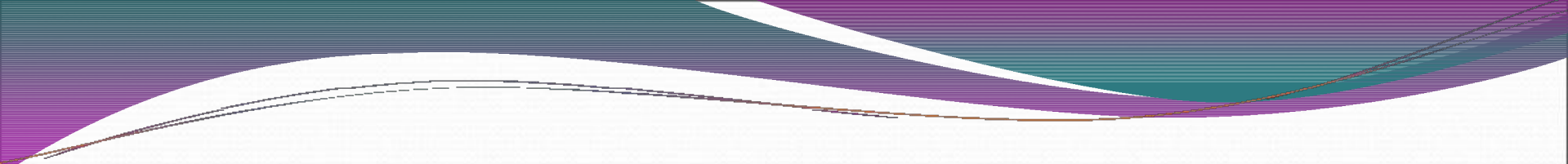
Point Lookout

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## OBJECTIVES

1. Participants will understand how occupation and successful occupational performance are key determinants of health, function, productivity, quality of life and wellbeing;
2. Participants will investigate the interplay of the person, environment and occupation and recognize the value of this interplay to those whose independence is threatened by disease, disability, injury, or social deprivation;



3. Participants will identify ways that occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants can address prevention and health promotion throughout the lifespan and across the continuum of care;

4. Participants will be able to explain Occupational Therapy and the role that occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants can play within the primary/community health care environment.

Thomas Moore-yesterday's keynote speaker- spoke about his latest book,

*Care of the Soul in Medicine*

In this book he reveals his vision for improving health care. He spells out how health-care workers can care for their patients as whole persons—body, soul, and spirit.

He gives advice to both healthcare providers and patients for maintaining dignity and humanity, providing spiritual guidance for dealing with feelings of mortality and threat, He encourages patients to not only take an active part in healing but also to view illness as a positive passage to new awareness.



I propose that Nurse Practitioners, Occupational Therapy practitioners and Thomas Moore all hold philosophical values which are very much in sync.

Our collective vision is to provide a service that feeds a person's whole being; body-mind-spirit.

We may do this differently using different techniques, however—the penultimate outcome is the same....



OT Philosophy is steeped in the concepts of moral treatment, holism, dignity, and quality of life.

Our roots began in the arena of Mental Health, helping those with mental illness develop habits and routines that would support these concepts and improve wellbeing through “occupation”.

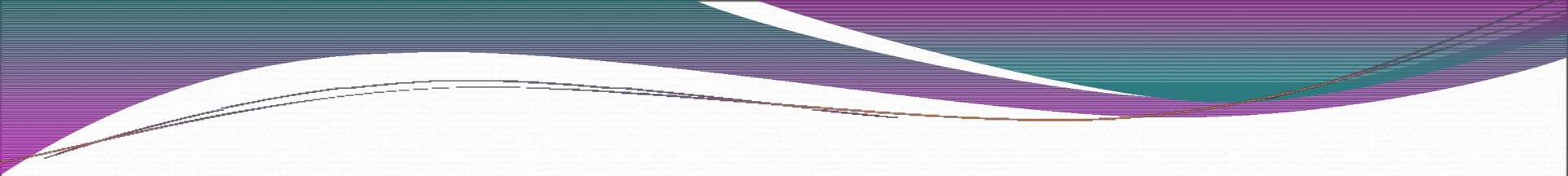
Through time, we have evolved to meet the challenges of a broader society.



Occupational Therapy practitioners believe that through OCCUPATION humans can influence the state of our own health and wellness.

and that

self efficacy, volition and interest support performance.

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- New research supports the neuroscience of occupational engagement and supports the idea that occupation can have a positive increase in brain neuroplasticity.

# Occupational Therapy's Domain

- ... Occupational Performance
- Occupation is anything activity that is purposeful and meaningful to a person in their life.
- Occupations include: ADLs, IADLs, Rest and Sleep, Education, Work, Play, Leisure and Social Participation.
- Occupational performance is a person's ability to participate and engage in life's occupations with satisfaction.

# What if you couldn't...

- Your ideas
- My choice

# Occupational Therapy Beliefs

1. Occupations are informed by roles;

2. Roles are informed through culture

and influenced by contexts and environments;

3. Habits and routines are crucial in supporting roles and occupational performance.

4. Adaptation is necessary for health maintenance.

## **OT-Part of the Healthcare Solution**



**Occupational therapy is a profession dedicated to the improvement and maximization of function and performance—how, when and how well people do the activities or “occupations” of life which are important to them—so that people can live healthier, more productive and satisfying lives.**

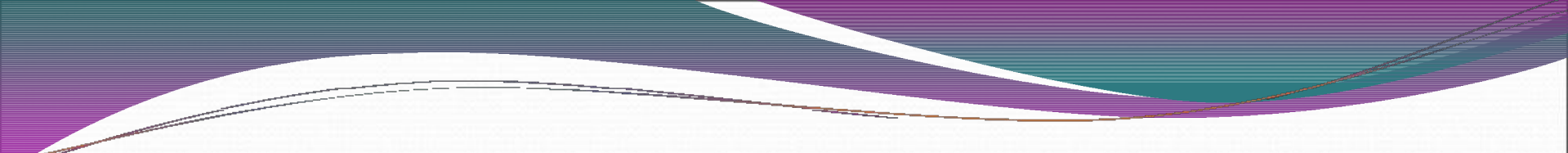


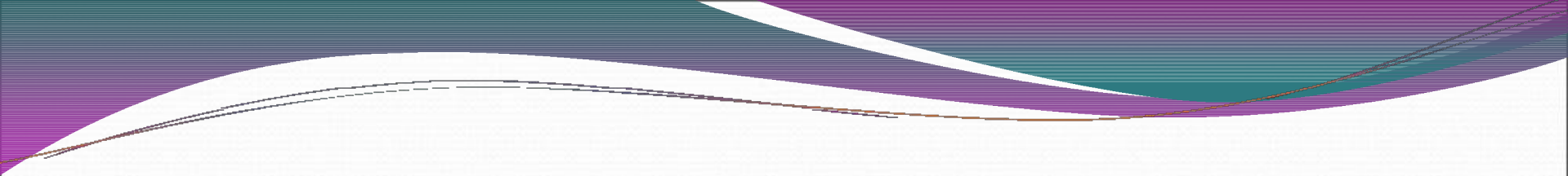
**Primary health care addresses basic health needs but must also include the ability to effectively link services that enable individuals to become or stay healthy.**

**Because of the holistic nature of occupational therapy and its expertise related to performance and function across the lifespan, occupational therapy practitioners could be vital in primary care teams.**

# **Occupational therapy practitioners can be a valuable part of a client's primary care team—**

- Critical care
- Habilitation and Rehabilitation
- Chronic Care Management
- Care Coordination
- Children with Disabilities
- Eldercare
- Prevention

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- **Occupational therapy focuses on enabling individuals to participate in productive and meaningful activities of daily life using approaches that help individuals self-manage—vital to such things as:**
  - **Effective medication management skills**
  - **Pain management**
  - **Fall prevention education and training**
  - **Energy conservation/work simplification**
  - **Self-care, and maintaining participation in key activities such as sleep, work and/or leisure.**

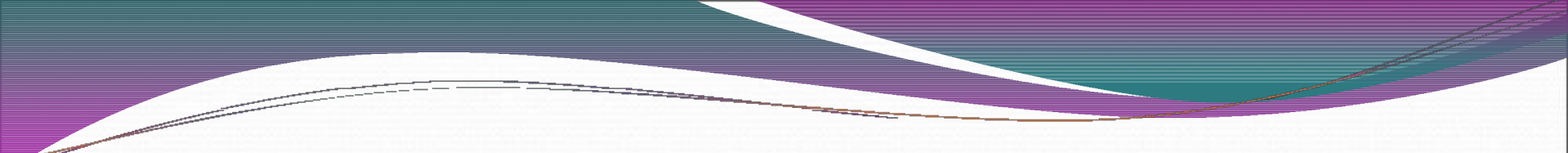


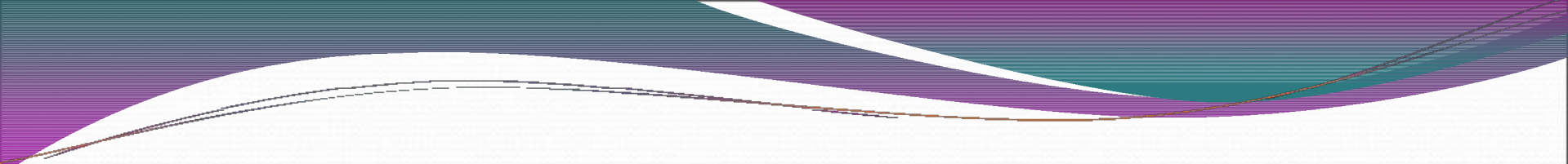
**Occupational therapy addresses issues of daily living that are often overlooked but are critical to care coordination, particularly for individuals with chronic conditions.**

**Occupational therapy practitioners have the education, perspective and knowledge base to be recognized as qualified providers of preventative services.**

**Occupational therapy practitioners have expertise in:**

- Habit and routine building**
- Falls risk assessment**
- Smoking cessation and MH coping skills development**
- Sensory and cognitive processing**

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- **Obesity interventions**
  - **Driving assessments and interventions**
  - **Community Mobility**
  - **Health literacy assessments and strategies**
  - **Assistive technology and Home modifications**
  - **plus a variety of other lifestyle management techniques important to the formulation and implementation of comprehensive, successful personalized prevention plans.**



**Occupational therapy is effective in assisting children with disabilities (ADHD, Autism, PDD) in schools or in other settings (*American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 2008) and working with families and caregivers in addressing the functional needs of Alzheimer's disease (*The Gerontologist*, 2000).**

# Research evidence

Research evidence has demonstrated that occupational therapy can be effectively delivered in a primary health care context.

Interventions for the management of chronic diseases and injury prevention programs in the workplace are areas of practice where occupational therapy can contribute to health promotion and disease prevention.

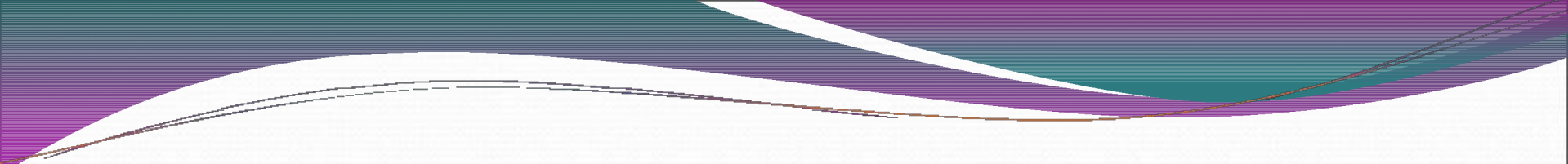
There is an emerging body of evidence for the use of a skill building approach with individuals who are homeless.



Several studies have demonstrated the importance of engagement in meaningful occupations for people with mental health conditions living in the community.

Early intervention programs in occupational therapy with healthy populations of infants and mothers have been developed and implemented in various community settings.

These primary prevention programs offered during the first year of a child's life have been shown to have sustained effect on parenting knowledge, attitudes and practices.



Occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants also contribute to the early identification and treatment of learning disabilities among children which has been found to assist in the prevention of academic, social, sensory and emotional/behavioral problems.

Occupational therapy practitioners also work as part of interdisciplinary teams in school settings providing services that seek to enhance the health and well-being of children and youth.



# Research Example-Older Adults

There are several areas of occupational therapy community practice specific to older adults that show strong evidence for involvement of occupational therapy in primary health care (Restall, Leclair & Fricke, 2005).

The Well Elderly Study completed at USC (Clark et al, 1997; Jackson, Carlson, Mandel, Zemke & Clark, 1998) examined the efficacy of preventative occupational therapy compared to social activity programs and no therapy. The intent was to reduce health-related declines among urban, multi-ethnic, independent-living older adults. Results showed that the occupational therapy program led to greater gains in quality of life scores; greater prevention of functional decline; showed a trend toward decreased medical expenditures; and was found to be cost-effective. The intervention has been replicated in other settings with different older adult populations and produced similar results.

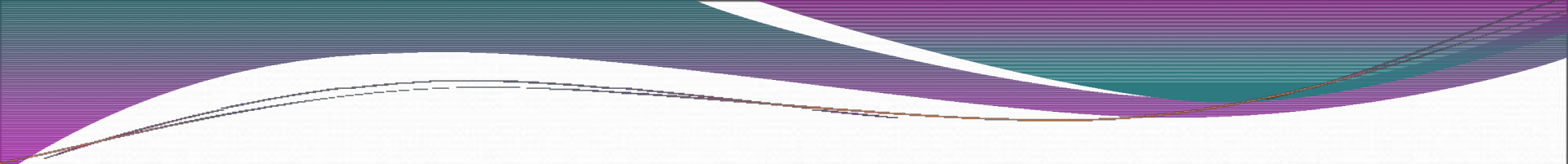
(Matuska, Giles-Heins, Flinn, Neighbor,  
& Bass-Haugen, 2003; Scott, Butin, Tewfik, Burkardt, Mandel, & Nelson, 2001)





# Personal Case Examples:

- Hazel
- Jean and Jack

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- **Research indicates that preventative occupational therapy cost-effectively slowed down the declines associated with aging and improved health in the elderly or simply prevented injuries (e.g., through preventable falls) and improved lives. (*Journal of Gerontology: Psychological Services*, 2002; *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*, 2006; *Journal of Rehabilitation Medicine*, 2008).**

# Mental Health

Several studies have demonstrated the importance of engagement in meaningful occupations to people with mental health conditions living in the community (Legault & Rebeiro, 2001; Mee & Sumsion, 2001; Wu, 2001).

Occupational therapy practitioners are using individual supported employment as a method of enabling individuals with mental health problems to gain and retain employment, education and voluntary work (Auberbach, 2001; Krupa, Lagarde, Carmichael, Hougham & Stewart, 1998; Oka et al., 2004).

## Case Examples

Cindy

Jan

# Workplace issues

The occupational therapist's and occupational therapy assistant's understanding of the interface between the worker (person), the workplace (environment) and the job (occupation) is integral when considering both prevention and intervention programs.

This understanding of the interface applies when considering the goal of creating healthier work environments in broad terms and when considering the impact of the job and workplace on specific employees.

Injury prevention and health promotion programs in the workplace include ergonomic assessments and recommendations such as safe lifting initiatives, educational interventions such as participatory ergonomics programs, and workplace wellness Initiatives such advocating for modified work schedules to allow employee participation in health promoting activities.

# Assistive technology

Provides a means to perform occupations differently or helps to overcome barriers in the environment.

Assistive technology includes a broad scope of devices ranging from very simple and basic to sophisticated computerized systems.

The role of the occupational therapy practitioner in providing assistive technology is to assist and guide the client in identifying his or her needs for assistive technology, to provide education on equipment options, training in the use of assistive technology and, when necessary, assisting the client to secure funding for acquisition of technology.

With the provision of assistive technology, individuals, both young and old, are enabled to participate in activities such as reading on-line books, carrying out personal banking, going to work or school, communicating with family and friends, and accessing various physical environment independently.

# Health

**People define health in many ways but it is beyond being disease-free. When people describe “healthy” it usually involves being able to DO things: to work despite conditions or age, being interested in the world, having meaningful relationships and tasks and having energy and vitality to fulfill occupations and roles.**



OT helps people to DO



**All of this involves performance of activities of daily life which ultimately contribute to quality of life (*British Medical Journal*, 1999).**

**Occupational therapy, combined with other services and interventions, is the way for people to live life to its fullest.**

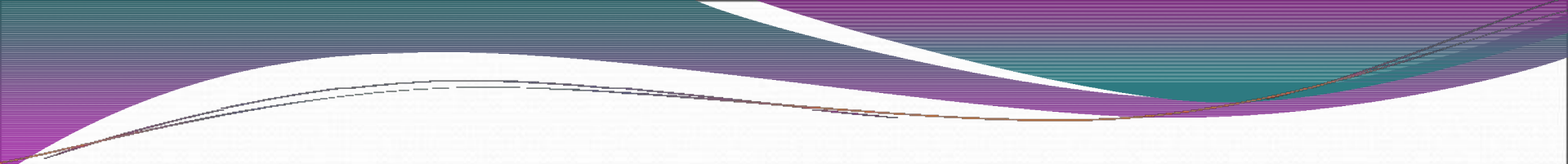
# Twelve factors or “determinants of health” have been identified that are interrelated and are known to affect health status:

1. income and social status
2. social support networks
3. education
4. employment/working conditions
5. social environments
6. physical environments
7. personal health practices and coping skills
8. healthy child development
9. biology and genetic endowment
10. health services
11. gender
12. culture

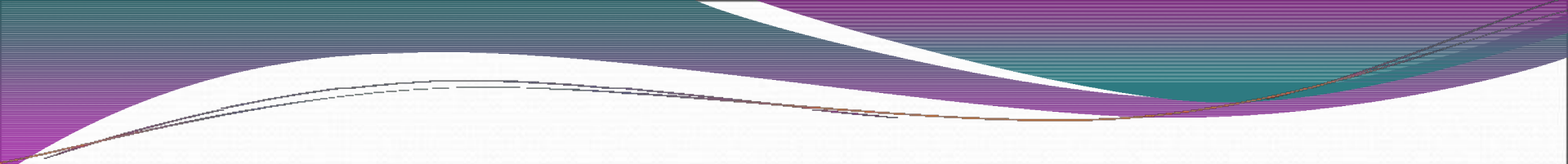
Many of these determinants of health relate directly to occupational performance and will therefore be integral to the practice of Occupational therapy in primary health care.

# Why OT should be part of the solution? OT

- 1. Occupational therapy is goal-oriented and can play an essential role in meaningful and effective efforts to improve society's health along with improving the health care system.**
- 2. Occupational Therapy practitioners and scientists have also developed tools specifically directed at addressing issues of "how" people function when they have disabling conditions such as a stroke (*American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 2008).**



**3. Occupational therapy practitioners are specialists in using these tools and in facilitating healthy change in clients. Research has shown that training and assistance (i.e., occupational therapy) in “how” to do things and addressing underlying lifestyle changes increases compliance with fitness activities (*Arthritis and Rheumatism*, 2008). Thus occupational therapy should be central to many aspects of the health care system.**



**4. Occupational Therapy and the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) are committed to quality health care, prevention, wellness and rehabilitation services for all individuals across the lifespan.**

**When people can DO for themselves, we are a healthier community.**

**This can reduce health care costs and promote a healthier nation. (JAMA, 1997)**

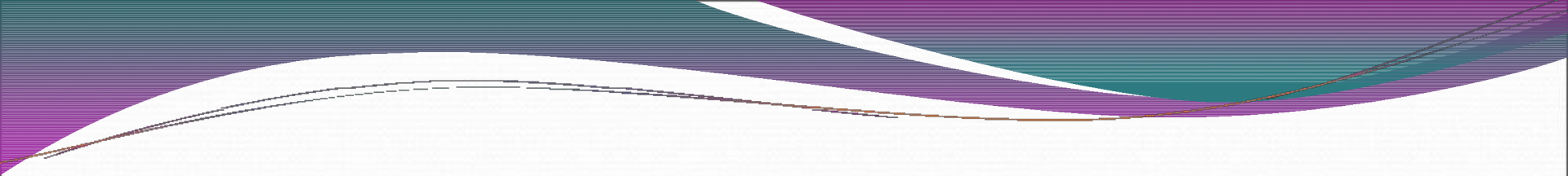
**5. Occupational therapy interventions help clients with compliance with their in home medical regimen delivering improved outcomes and thus cost savings.**



# Occupational Therapy and Primary Health Care – Meeting the Challenges

The belief (understanding) of occupational therapists that occupation plays a central role in the health of an individual is not widely communicated and understood outside of the profession of occupational therapy (Godfrey, 2000).

“Occupational therapy practitioners with a well-developed concept of the relationship between people’s engagement in occupation and health are a primary source of expertise for research and developing public health practice based on the relationship.” (Wilcock, 1998 p. 221)



Current research is demonstrating the importance of occupational performance and the effectiveness of occupational therapy interventions in promoting the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities.

With a unique perspective on the interaction between individuals, occupations, and environments, occupational therapy practitioners have demonstrated primary health care roles with populations of seniors, children, youth, people who are homeless, living with mental, physical injury and illness and occupational deprivation as well as those within the justice system.

Expansion of these roles as part of interdisciplinary teams will strengthen our primary health care system in meeting the health needs of our citizens.

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