

NBAOT Position Statement Regarding Members Performing Nasopharyngeal Swabbing to Assist with COVID-19 Testing

In light of the current COVID-19 pandemic situation, the Department of Health has approached allied health professionals in the province to identify those who would have the professional skills to perform tasks that may not be specific to their usual scope of practice, specifically nasopharyngeal swabbing for COVID-19 testing.

1. First and foremost, NBAOT believes that occupational therapy services are essential to the health and well-being of New Brunswickers, enabling them to continue to live in place in their communities, which is especially important in terms of the management health care resources during this current pandemic (e.g., preventing hospitalizations).
2. NBAOT legislation does not restrict occupational therapists from performing nasopharyngeal swabbing
3. It is the position of NBAOT that nasopharyngeal swabbing can be officially delegated to an occupational therapist, as long as the employer provides adequate training and ongoing support. The Department of Health has stated that the health networks (Horizon or Vitalité) will provide training and supports for the allied health professionals who can assist with the swabs.
4. In terms of coverage for liability, it is up to the employee to verify with your employer that you are covered the employer's general liability policy for an activity that has been requested by the employer with adequate training provided by them. In terms of individual professional liability, an individual OT's coverage may be extended to this activity, as long as the province or the provincial regulatory body has granted the authority to perform these activities.

As an allied health profession integral to the health and wellness of New Brunswick residents, occupational therapists are well placed to assist where needed. Our members demonstrate a willingness to contribute and collaborate with their colleagues in health care.

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