

Can an Occupational Therapy Assistant sign a discharge summary?

An Occupational Therapy Assistant must work in Oregon under the Supervision of an Occupational Therapist. Administrative rule OAR 339-010-005(1) states: "Supervision" is a process in which two or more people participate in a joint effort to promote, establish, maintain and/or evaluate a level of performance. The occupational therapist is responsible for the program outcomes and documentation to accomplish the goals and objectives.

In general it is recommended that an Occupational Therapist co-sign discharge summaries and this is common practice. However, the Board at its January, 2004 meeting discussed this further. The Board acknowledged that in some cases when an Occupational Therapy Assistant is not adding to or amending the goals, and is simply summing up the progress, not changing the charting or planning in any way, the Occupational Therapy Assistant can sign the summary. It was also noted that in some facilities discharge summaries are not signed at all. There are great differences between employers as to what a discharge summary consists of and how it is used.

In conclusion, the Board noted that although it is good practice to have an OT co-sign the discharge summary, more flexibility was needed depending on the circumstances and the content of the discharge summary. Therefore, the Board concluded that an OT did not have to co-sign discharge summary in all cases.

Also on the web site at www.oregon.gov/otlb see the section on Supervision and AOTA guidelines adopted by the Board.