

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSOCIATION OF GHANA

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P. O. Box KB 143
Korle Bu
Accra - Ghana

REF NO: OTGH150620

15th June, 2020

The Minister

Ministry of Gender Children and Social Protection

Accra- Ghana

Dear Sir/Madam,

SUPPORT FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN GHANA

As a concerned member of the **Ghana Federation of Allied Health Professionals (GFAHP) which is regulated by the Allied Health Professions Council of Ghana**; which was established by an Act of Parliament in 2013 (ACT 857), the Occupational Therapy Association of Ghana (OTAG) would like to appeal to the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MOGCSP) to provide inclusive service packages for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) during this trying period; where the country and world battles with COVID-19.

Indisputably, COVID-19 has been a global pandemic unlike any that has been seen in this century. The entire world has been thrown in disarray with numerous persons losing employment and sources of livelihood whilst still having to cater for themselves and their family members. This unfortunate situation has only left Persons with Disabilities and their families much more vulnerable as they have for a long time been a disadvantaged population.

The World Health Organization (WHO) states emphatically that PWDs are vulnerable to poverty, less likely to be employed and have unmet health needs. Thus, PWDs are amongst the hardest hit by the crises caused by COVID-19. The Government of Ghana has shown its commitment to supporting PWDs through various initiatives; passing the Persons with Disability Act in 2006, signing the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2007, and the passing of various inclusive ACTs.

However, it is troubling that despite the plentiful provisions that have been made for PWDs in policy; the implementation of these policies and laws is rather dawdling. It is for this reason that the OTAG voices out this petition to the Government of Ghana through the MOGCSP to hasten in implementing its mandate to cater for PWDs at this critical time.

Occupational therapy is a client-centered health profession concerned with promoting health and wellbeing through the participation in meaningful everyday activities. The primary goal of occupational therapy is to enable people to participate in the activities of everyday life. We strongly

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believe that occupational engagement improves quality of life and life satisfaction. As a profession greatly involved in rehabilitation, PWDs are a major client-group for occupational therapists therefore we professionally mandated to advocate for their health, well-being and inclusion.

It is our professional opinion that service packages for PWDs and their families during this period should include provision of basic relief goods (foodstuff, clothing items, toilet paper, sanitary items, etc.), free healthcare for scheduled hospital visits and assistive devices, assisted education for children with disabilities at home, and a monthly stipend.

This provision would go a long way to alleviate the burden of the crises imposed on PWDs. It is important to note that our beloved nation gains nothing if our PWDs contract COVID-19 because they were hard-pressed and thus chose survival over safety. However, with adequate provision and rehabilitative support our PWDs can take better care of themselves to contribute meaningfully to national economic development.

We are confident that the Government of Ghana would respond appropriately and swiftly to this petition to assist PWDs as we strive together for an inclusive Ghana.

Long live Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection!!!

Long live Ghana!!!

Yours-in-service,

Joana Nana Serwaa Akrofi

OTAG General Secretary

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CC:

1. Director of Institutional Care Division, Ghana Health Service
2. Director, Special Mothers Project
3. Chairperson, Inclusion Ghana
4. Executive Director, Henry Djaba Foundation
5. President, Ghana Federation of Disability Organizations
6. Director General, Ministry of Health
7. Director General, Ghana Health Service
8. Chief Executive, Mental Health Authority
9. Director General, Ghana Education Service
10. Director, Samira Empowerment and Humanitarian Projects