

# Occupational Therapy Licensure Compact Testimony

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January 3, 2024

# Occupational Therapy



Occupational therapy can help clients participate in life activities (occupations) and provide recommendations for:

- Activities of daily living (such as bathing, dressing, eating, and participating in school)
- Adaptive equipment to make daily tasks easier
- Caregiver and family training
- Returning to work, school, and leisure activities after an illness or injury
- Techniques to aid in memory, concentration, and executive functioning (e.g., planning and prioritizing, functional cognition)
- Falls prevention and home safety and accessibility
- Activities to promote mental health
- Other practice areas

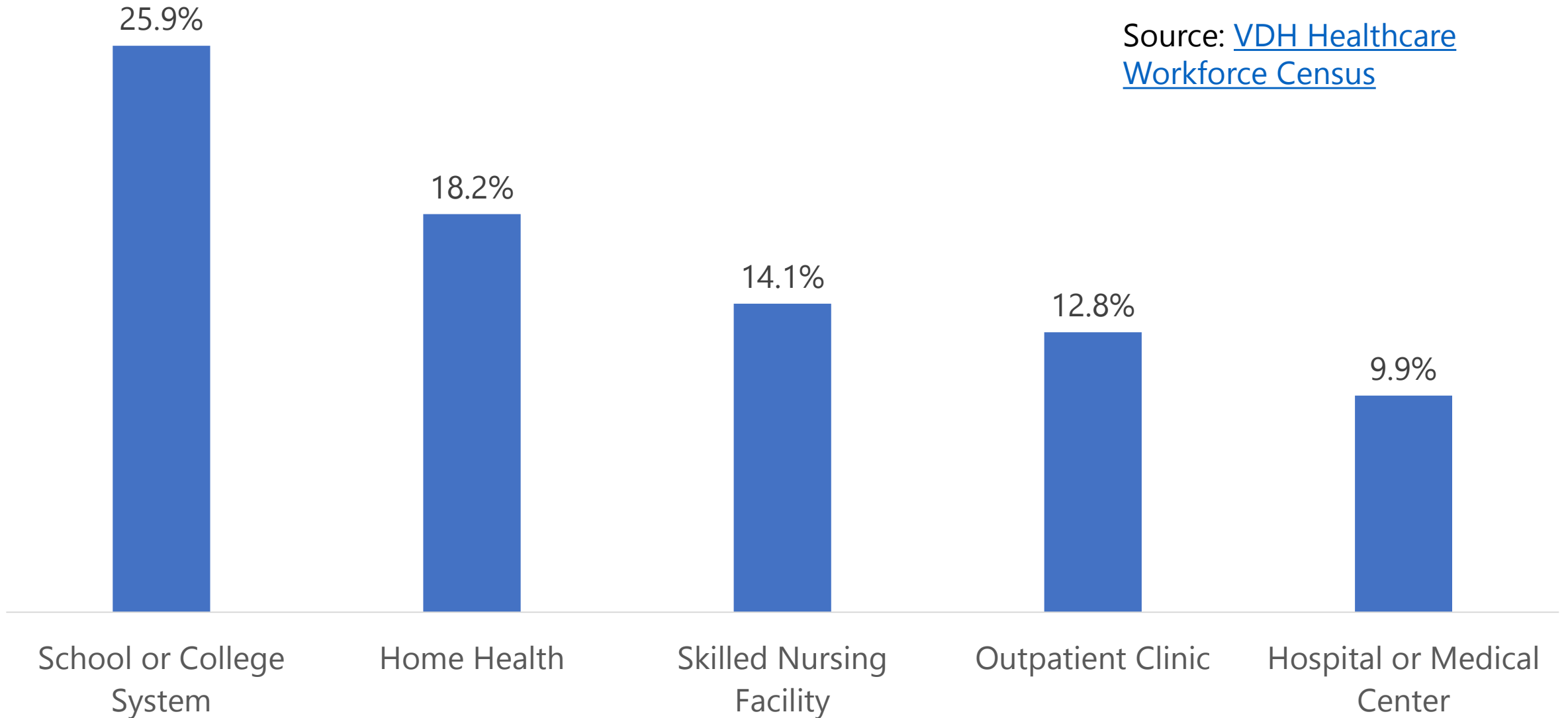
# Occupational Therapists in Vermont: 2020 Workforce Census



- 412 Licenses renewed in 2020
- 313 occupational therapy practitioners actively practicing in Vermont
- National shortage of occupational therapists expected to increase through 2030 (Lin, Zhang, & Dixon, 2015)
- Average growth rate of profession 2022-2032 is 12%, compared to average growth rate for all professions of 3% (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics)

# Vermont Occupational Therapy Practice Settings

Source: [VDH Healthcare Workforce Census](#)



# Vermont Occupational Therapy Association

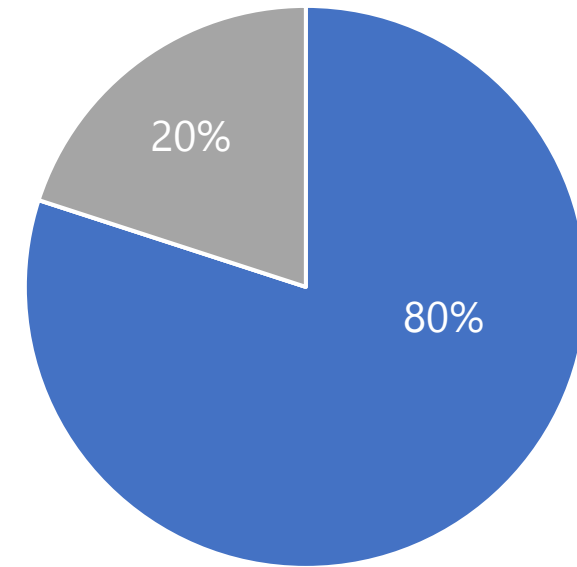
- Nonprofit 501(c)(6) member organization run by volunteer Board of Directors
- Engage in advocacy for the occupational therapy profession and provide continuing education for members
- 129 members
  - 112 active practitioners (approximately 27% of licensed OT practitioners in Vermont)



# VOTA Compact Education and Engagement:

- 2023 Conference presentation and Q&A with Chuck Wilmarth, VP of Health Policy and State Affairs at AOTA
- 2023 member survey (~10% response rate)

I think the occupational therapy licensure compact would...



- Positively impact OT practice in the state
- Negatively impact OT practice in the state
- Other or I'm not sure

# Survey results...

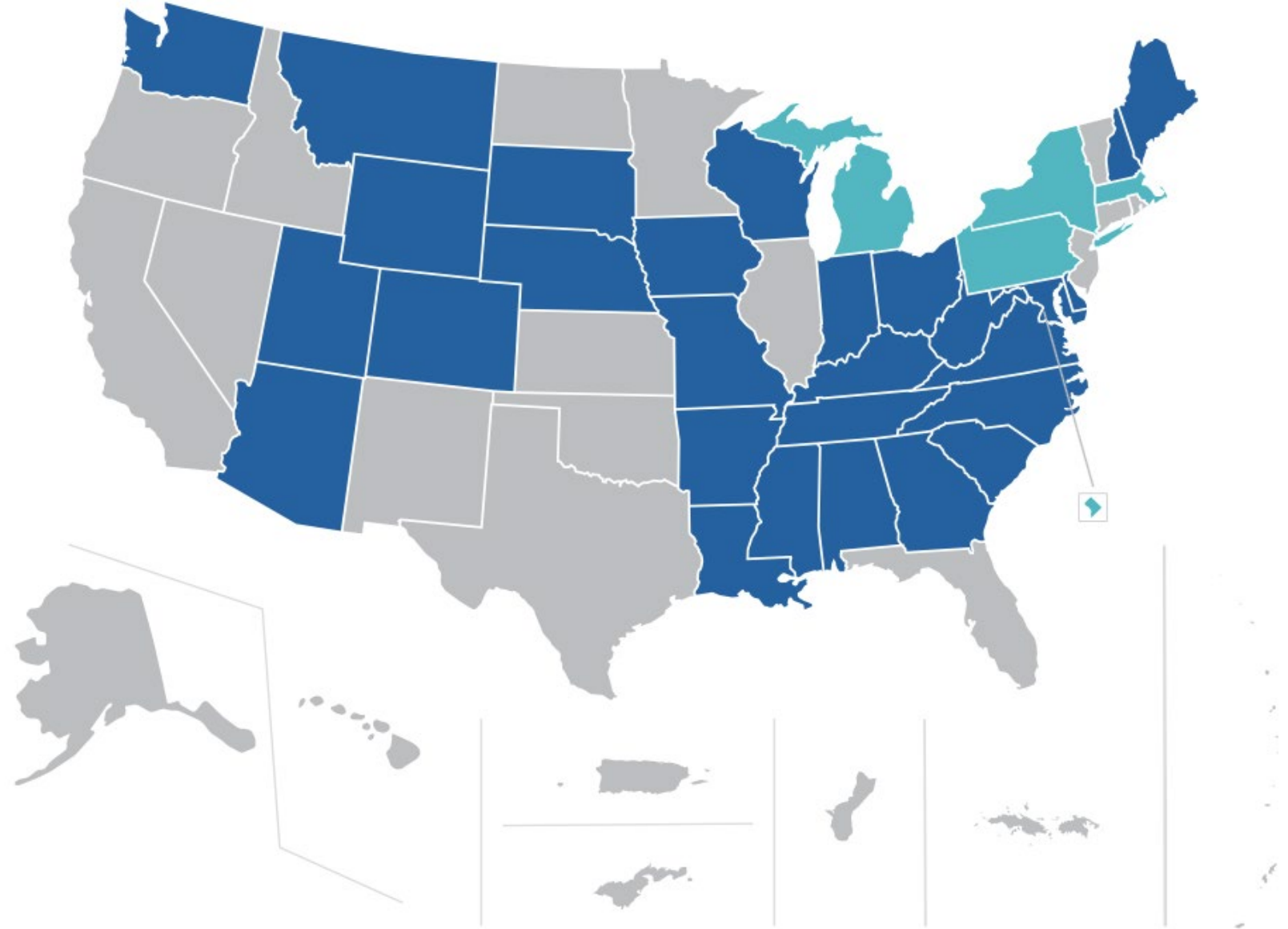
- "This would be very beneficial especially if NH and NY [joined], particularly due to Dartmouth Health serving many NH/VT residents"
- "At one point, I held licenses in VT, MA and NH. Having to apply in each state was a nightmare, but for a while, I had work in all 3 states, each with it's own application headaches. A compact would make this process almost seamless. It would also make providing telehealth easier."



## Compact Map

- Legislation Enacted
- Legislation Pending
- No Active Legislation

❖ 28 states have passed compact including New Hampshire





# How does the compact work?

- Same in form and function as PT and Nurse compacts
- Must have a license in good standing in a home state that is a compact member
- When wishing to work in another state, obtain a “compact privilege” in that state
- Anyone requesting a compact privilege would need a FBI background check if not already required by their state
- The OT Compact preserves the regulatory authority of each compact member state to protect public health and safety through the existing state regulatory structure
- Vermont would continue to determine the requirements for licensure as well as to maintain our unique scope of practice for all occupational therapy practitioners

# Compact Benefits

- VOTA supports the licensure compact because it...
  - Preserves and strengthens state licensure systems
  - Enhances public safety
  - Improves access to occupational therapy services
  - Increases market opportunities for OTs and OTAs by authorizing practice in member states (including via telehealth)
  - Enhances mobility for OT practitioners



# Compact benefits, continued

- VOTA supports the licensure compact because it...
  - Supports relocating military spouses
  - Improves continuity of care when clients travel or relocate
  - Encourages cooperation among compact member states in regulating the practice of occupational therapy
  - Streamlines the licensing application experience for OTs and OTAs to practice across state lines



# FAQ:

Q: What is the cost?

A: There are no fiscal implications for states. Vermont can set its fee for compact privileges.

Q: Will Vermont lose jobs to out of state workers?

A: This has not been the case with other professions' compacts.

Thank you!



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