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To whom it may concern,

My name is Beth Ann Duchess and I have been an OTR for 12 years and I have loved it every minute that I have been a part of the field...I have genuine concerns regarding the upcoming regulations regarding recertifications for OTs. Having been in the field for as long as I have has enabled me to enjoy and respect the requirements to keep up to date with continuing education. This enables me to grow as a therapist regarding my treatment and evaluation strategies. However, my life situation with having 2 premature sons 8 years ago has required me to cut my schedule back to part time to allow me to get my son to therapies, etc...For this reason I am forced to work a part time schedule . It is true that the majority of the OT field is women, and a large number of these women are, or are going to be, mothers during their OT career. I feel that being a caring and loving mother first and foremost has enabled me to become the type of therapist that I am. Have I gone in and spent Christmas Eve with a patient that was dying of Multiple Myeloma and spending the holiday alone??...yes! I have. Being a mother has made me a more caring and compassionate person... and a better therapist.

It is very disheartening that the only options left to a casual or part time therapist is the presenting or publishing option. Since when is it fair to punish an individual for what their life situations have required them to do??? Especially when those same circumstances and situations are part of what make us the special component to a persons overall recovery...

I really feel this is the type of (what I consider to be "unfair") requirement that may cause more OTs to leave the field than already are. It is unfortunate that some other options cannot be offered to advocate the field, expand our knowledge and allow us to love our career for the reason we got in to it in the first place... because we want to help people.

Unfortunately working 3 days a week does not enable me to take a student nor mentor within my company. I propose that other options are offered that do not require a FT schedule to be eligible. Possibly the requirement of performing facility based inservices to nursing and other staff to advocate and promote the field of OT and its purpose within different settings...or possibly some sort of option to promote the field into the school systems... by presenting some sort of educational forum for prospective students. These are beneficial options to both the therapists themselves and also a good way to advocate for the profession in general, and get some "new blood" interested in the occupation that strives to make people the "best they can be."

I love being an OT and I would love to continue to do so for the next several years with good standing in my profession. I appreciate your time, and I certainly hope that these issues will be seriously considered before a decision is made that may be detrimental to the good therapists that we have within the field.

Sincerely,
Beth Ann Duchess-OTR/L

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