



Private Practice Occupational Therapy Services in British Columbia (2017): Survey Results and Suggested Fee Guide

I Introduction

Every two years, the British Columbia chapter of the Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists (CAOT-BC) conducts a survey of occupational therapists in British Columbia who are in private practice. Survey respondents complete the survey anonymously and CAOT-BC summarizes the results of this survey. From the survey results CAOT-BC generates a suggested fee guide. The suggested fee guide is issued by CAOT-BC for professional information purposes only and provides occupational therapists in British Columbia with aggregate information on the prevailing range of fees being charged for occupational therapy services across the province in community and clinic settings which are outside of the British Columbia public health system. The current survey results and suggested fee guide are based on survey data collected in March 2017.

The Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists (CAOT) does not require its members to adjust or amend their service pricing in order to conform with the suggested fee guide. Moreover, membership in CAOT is not conditional in any way on occupational therapists adopting the suggested fee guideline in their practices. CAOT encourages occupational therapists to evaluate and set their individual service fees based on their own business model and local market conditions. Occupational therapists should consider a variety of factors when determining their fees, including, but not limited to: the availability and cost of treatment equipment, training and registration of staff, office space, local market conditions, and travel. CAOT does not support setting service fees based on an occupational therapist's number of years of service delivery¹. Lastly, CAOT notes that many funding parties of occupational therapy services set their own reimbursement rates and that such funding parties did not collaborate with CAOT-BC in the administration of the survey or in the development of the suggested fee guide.

II Private Practice Fees

1. Rehabilitation Services

- **Professional time**, including preparation, assessment, treatment, verbal and written consultation and reporting, averages \$112/hour with payer rates ranging from a low average of \$60/hour to a high average of \$275/hour. For functional capacity evaluations specifically, most therapists charge an hourly rate ranging from \$100-\$225, while some charge a flat rate ranging from \$1300-\$1800.
- **Travel time** is typically billed at half the professional hourly rate with mileage charged separately or at the full professional hourly rate with no separate mileage charge.
- **Rural travel** may be negotiated differently for travel/mileage charges.

¹ For more information, see *CAOT-BC Issue Paper: Occupational Therapy and Fees Based on Experience*



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- **Flat fees** may be negotiated between the therapist and client/fee payer and these vary considerably depending on the service; flat fees are established using expected hours and hourly rate charges (e.g. Functional Capacity Evaluations).
- **Cancellation fees:** Most therapists charge a cancellation fee with less than 24 hours' notice.

2. Medical Legal Services and Court Attendance

- **Professional time**, including assessment, consultation and report preparation, ranges from \$110-\$275 per hour.
- **Rush rate fees** are typically charged when there is a short turn around between referral and report due date; rush rate premiums range from 50% increase, \$150-\$275 hourly, or a flat fee ranging from \$400-\$600 added to the price of services.
- **Court attendance** for the half day is billed at \$175-\$1300 and for the full day from \$1200 to \$1800.
- **Cancellation fees** vary with the amount of notice provided. Most charge cancellation fees with less than 72 hours' notice.
- **Travel time** is charged between 50% and 100% of the professional time rate with an average charge of \$116/hour.

3. Rehabilitation Assistant Services

- **Subcontracting:** Some occupational therapy companies provide rehabilitation assistant services while others sub-contract services to independent companies or independent assistants.
- **Direct client time** ranges from \$45-50 per hour.
- **Travel time** is billed at half the hourly rate with mileage charged separately or at the full hourly rate with no separate mileage charge.
- **Cancellation fees:** For most programs, there is a cancellation fee for cancelled appointments with less than 24 hours' notice; fees vary by company and notice period.

4. Expenses and Administrative Fees

- **Service provider mileage** is charged between \$0.47/km to \$0.60/km with an average rate of \$0.50/km.
- **Clinical program expenses** are usually billed at cost (e.g. gym fees).
- **Administrative fees** may be applied to requests for copies of files, reports or other information pertaining to a file. Fees may be applied for the retrieval and copying of discharged file records. Long-term file storage fees, file retrieval fees, paper, equipment, and administrative staff costs appear to be offset with these charges.



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- Therapists may set flat administration fees for office expenses.
- **Document copying/scanning fees** range from \$0.25/page to \$2.00/page copied. A declining fee per page may be charged for large files and this varies among practices.
- **Incidental office expenses** including postage, courier, word processing, supplies and parking are occasionally charged and appear to vary with the payer group and practice type; fees and billing parameters for these services vary widely.

Service Agreements

Many occupational therapists work under specific contracts where fees and reimbursement policies are highly structured. However, many therapists also contract with funding parties outside of these well-structured contracts. In the interest of transparency, CAOT-BC suggests that occupational therapists and funding parties be aware of all the costs (rates, deposits, cancellation policies, fees for expenses) *before* entering in a relationship. This will ensure that each party's expectations are clearly understood and will facilitate a positive interaction and business relationship.