

July 31, 2000

Barbara Heine, PT, HPCS
President, American Hippotherapy Association
5001 Woodside Road
Woodside, CA 94062

Dear Ms. Heine:

The American Occupational Therapy Association, Inc. (AOTA) recognizes the use of the movement of the horse (hippotherapy) as an intervention tool as long as it is based on an appropriate occupational therapy evaluation, treatment plan, and goals and assists in achieving the appropriate functional outcome.

It is appropriate for occupational therapy services using the movement of the horse (hippotherapy) as a treatment tool to be billed as neuromuscular reeducation, therapeutic activities, therapeutic exercise, or sensory integrative activities provided that all payer requirements have been met and depending upon the treatment goals and the way hippotherapy is used during the treatment session. Therapeutic horseback riding in which the goal is to achieve the skill of riding would not be considered occupational therapy.

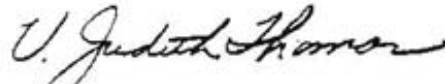
The occupational therapy practitioner using the movement of the horse also should be specifically trained in the use of this tool.

Sincerely,



Deborah Lieberman, MHSA, OTR/L, FAOTA

Practice Department



V. Judith Thomas, MGA

Director

Reimbursement and Regulatory Policy