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This is in support of House Bill 2432, relating to Art Therapy.

Committee members may be interested in a bit of background on this Bill and art therapy in Oregon. I will briefly share a little of the history of the profession in this State, credentialing issues and where we stand today. I have been personally involved in the development of art therapy in Oregon since 1986 when I founded and Chaired the first MA in Art Therapy degree program in the State. It has been interesting to see how well art therapists have been received into mental health agencies and hospitals. When I left my position at the University in June of 2016 there were over 140 registered art therapists (ATR) in Oregon and many more working towards the credential. The Program's graduates have moved into a wide variety of mental health settings in both rural and densely populated areas of Oregon, other regions of the country and abroad. They contribute strong clinical skills and innovative creative approaches much to the benefit of their clients and the agencies in which they are employed.

Most art therapists in Oregon are licensed as professional counselors (LPC) by the Oregon Board of Licensed Professional Counselors and Therapists. They are usually nationally registered (ATR) and Board certified (ATR-BC) by the Art Therapy Credentials Board (ATCB). They practice as LPC ATR or as LPC ATR-BC. A small number of art therapists are credentialed only by ATCB. Having a license in art therapy will enable them to meet the requirement that mental health providers hold a license in Oregon. The scope of practice will be a little more restricted for them than for licensed art therapists who are also licensed as professional counselors.

The art therapy license is not intended to exclude other therapists or health care providers such as nurses from using art in their work with clients. I know of many counselors, social workers and psychologists who do so in a careful and responsible way. This does not mean they are art therapists or are practicing art therapy which is a discrete discipline. Just as much of what LPCs provide to our clients is based upon theories of psychology, we do not claim to be psychologists or to be practicing psychology.

If there are any Registered and Board Certified Art Therapists (ATR-BC) who are licensed as LPCs and who prefer not to go for a second license, I trust that after January of 2019, they will not be prohibited from listing their national art therapy credentials that reflect their qualifications. This is unclear in the current Bill and may have to be resolved in the future.

The Committee may be wondering why we are affiliating ourselves with the Health Licensing Office rather than the Oregon Board of Licensed Professional Counselors and Therapists since so many of us are already licensed by them as LPCs. From my work on the first art therapy licensing effort, sponsored by Representative Ron Adams, I learned that establishing a new Board for a small number of

practitioners is politically difficult and unreasonably costly for the State. Initially, our current group of art therapists was interested in establishing a specialty license under the OBLPCT, however there was concern that this, our second effort, might fail due to the expense factor. From my own experience when I served as Chairperson of the Oregon Board of Licensed Counselors and Therapists some years ago, I have the impression that specialty licenses present significant challenges to a Board. Another concern that was raised is that credentialed art therapists who have not pursued the LPC might not qualify for the art therapy license with the OBLPCT. So, the group decided to approach the Health Licensing Office. They have been helpful. I have been told there will not be a Board, rather it will be a licensing program, less expensive to run and more likely to move forward during this period of fiscal stress.

There is a lot of support for this Bill from hospitals and agencies as well as from the Coalition of Oregon Professional Associations for Counseling and Therapy (COPACT). Clearly, to protect the public from unqualified practitioners all mental health providers should hold a relevant mental health license. I hope that in your deliberations you will view the art therapy Bill favorably and provide assistance if changes are necessary. This Bill is an important step forward for the profession of art therapy in our State.

I deeply regret that my previous commitments to clients on Monday prevent me from attending the hearing.

Respectfully,

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