

March 14, 2025

Re: HB 3761 Art Therapy Insurance Reimbursement

To: Senator Kathleen Taylor, Senate District 21

I am writing to express my support of House Bill 3761 which requires the Oregon Health Authority and coordinated care organizations to provide reimbursement in the state's medical assistance program for the cost of behavioral health services provided by licensed art therapists, licensed certified art therapists and provisional licensed art therapists.

This legislation is important because it expands access to therapeutic mental health services, providing access to care for the 1.4 million Oregon Medicaid recipients, addressing disparities in care for low-income and underserved communities. Art therapists are trained both in art and psychological theory, on par with other mental health clinicians. The entry to practice requires a Master's degree in Art Therapy, two years of supervised clinical practice, and passing a board certification exam. This legislation aligns Oregon with the 13 other states that recognize art therapists as qualified mental health providers, and it expands the workforce by providing more mental health providers for clients to access services.

I have worked as an art therapist in Oregon for fifteen years, my career focused on supporting older adults. Older adults are unserved in the United States and the population in Oregon continues to grow, ranked 11th in the country for highest number of individuals aged 65 and older. (Population Reference Bureau) "As a sign of the massive demographic structural change of Oregon's population, the number of persons 65 years and older has exceeded the number of children under the age of 18 since 2023." (Oregon. Gov, Population and Demographic Outlook) Art Therapy has the power to connect and support individuals of many ages, but it provides valuable resources and significant mental health support to older adults.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

Kristen Larsen, ATR, LPC, LAT