

03/14/2025

Re: HB 3761 Art Therapy Insurance Reimbursement

To: Representative Tom Anderson

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. Art therapists' training is comparable to other Master's level mental health training with equivalent coursework, ethical practice, clinical supervision and passing a board certification exam. As the Oregon Licensed Certified Art Therapist license is relatively new, recognition of the license as billable by Medicaid has not yet been established. This restricts low-income and underserved communities access to these essential services.

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 provide trauma-informed care that enhances emotional resilience, supports healing, and improves mental health outcomes.

Your support of House Bill 3761, will help to reduce redundancy for new graduates and current art therapists to no longer need to hold multiple license types to practice as an art therapist and to receive insurance reimbursement. It will also further streamline the process reducing administrative costs for the state licensing boards, Mental Health and Addiction Certification Board of Oregon, Oregon Board of Licensed Professional Counselors and Therapists, and Oregon Health Licensing Office, which all currently oversee similar aspects of licensing needed by art therapists in Oregon. House Bill 3761 will do this by establishing a supervised, provisional license for newly graduated master's level art therapists and bring all license levels under one licensing board (aligns with processes used by other behavioral health providers (professional counselors, marriage and family therapists, and clinical social workers) in Oregon.

By supporting HB 3761, you are reducing barriers for mental health professionals and increasing access to essential mental health care in Oregon. 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 at Oregon State Hospital (OSH) for over 6 years. I started my career there in the Creative Arts and Recreation Therapy Department to work under the job title 'Art Therapist.' I was promoted over 1.5 years ago into the Psychology Department to work as a Behavioral Health Specialist 3, where my role is in continuing to provide therapy and in clinically supervising clinicians and graduate students. I have actively utilized Art Therapy in both roles throughout my tenure at OSH. Art Therapy is an invaluable approach to one of the most vulnerable and ill populations living in Oregon. I have used Art Therapy to aid the most psychiatrically acute patients to gain competency to stand trial or return to the community. For many patients with whom I've worked, it's been the only therapeutic modality they were able to respond to at OSH.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter. Your decision to pass this bill and allow Art Therapists to bill medicaid will have an immensely positive ripple effect in our state.

Sincerely,  
Meirav Cafri, LPC, LCAT, ATR-BC  
Licensed Professional Counselor  
License and Board Certified Art Therapist