

Submitter: Amy Simpson
On Behalf Of: HB 3761
Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3761

Amy P. Simpson, ATR, CADCI, QMHP
a.studio12@gmail.com
3/16/2025

Re: HB 3761 Art Therapy Insurance Reimbursement

I am writing to express my support of House Bill 3761. Art therapists' training is comparable to other 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.

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.

Currently, I am the Mental Health Specialist at Central City Concern's (CCC) Letty Owings Center (LOC), a Level 3.5 inpatient Substance Use Dependence (SUD) treatment center in Portland that serves women who are pregnant and/or have young children. LOC provides 28 of the less than 100 "Mommy and Me" beds for SUD treatment in the state of Oregon. The funding for LOC's services is predominantly Medicaid, as our clients are more often than not subsisting on public services. At present, my agency is restricted to billing my services at a lower rate due to the lack of legislative support for Art Therapy as a valid mental health discipline, equal to that of other master's level mental health practitioners in Oregon. With the passing of this legislation, CCC would be able to bill and be compensated adequately for my services, thus benefiting a historically underserved population in our state.

This legislation is important because it expands access to therapeutic mental health services for Oregonians and empowers a growing workforce of mental health professionals. Art therapists provide trauma-informed care that enhances emotional resilience, supports healing, and improves mental health outcomes. By supporting HB 3761, you are reducing barriers for mental health professionals and increasing access to essential mental health care in Oregon.

Sincerely,

Amy P. Simpson