

Submitter: Orion Rodriguez
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3761

Hi, I'm submitting comment today as an art therapy graduate student at Lewis & Clark College. I also work as a Peer Support Specialist at the Multnomah County Crisis Assessment and Treatment Center, where I will be doing my master's internship next year. I'm asking you to please pass HB3761 out of the House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care. This bill will reduce administrative costs for both practitioners and the state by streamlining the licensure process, which will make it easier for me to begin practicing once I graduate.

It also expands access to therapeutic mental health services for Medicaid recipients, by creating a pathway for reimbursement for services provided. As someone who works inpatient care with primarily low-income clients, I have seen firsthand how important art therapy is to this population. I work with some of the most vulnerable people in our city, people who have experienced homelessness, poverty, and severe trauma. Art therapy is invaluable in helping my clients share their stories, process their experiences, and reintegrate into society. All too often, however, low-income clients are unable to access this essential service due to lack of insurance coverage. This bill would rectify this gap in coverage.

HB3761 will also align Oregon with other states that recognize art therapists as qualified mental health providers and will expand the workforce by integrating art therapists more fully into healthcare systems already in place. I have worked in behavioral health in Oregon for several years, and seen firsthand how a shortage of providers is impacting patients. I hear stories every day from clients who have struggled, over and over, to receive the help they need. This bill this will directly lead to more mental health providers for Oregonians to access behavioral health services.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my comments.