

Shannon Garcia
6835 N Wall Avenue
Portland, OR 97203

March 17, 2025

Re: HB 3761 Art Therapy Insurance Reimbursement

To: Representative Travis Nelson

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.

As an art therapy student graduating in June, this bill will have a significant impact to my ability to serve my communities. During my practicum and internship years, I have worked at a social emotional focus alternative school and in a cancer healing center and have accrued over 400 client facing hours. I was fortunate that in each of these sites, access to working with me was covered by an organization. I have seen first hand the ability that art therapy has to access emotions and shift mental states when traditional talk therapy falls short. The ability to work with me would not be possible in other settings, without clients having access to Medicaid. This bill is equitable in relation to other mental health services, and more importantly it increases access for citizens to seek and experience care that is suitable to their needs.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

Shannon Garcia
Lewis & Clark Graduate Student Art Therapy Intern