

April 25, 2025

Testimony in Support of House Bill 3761

Senate Committee on Health Care

To: Chair Patterson, Vice-Chair Hayden, Senator Campos, Senator Linthicum, and Senator Reynolds

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of House Bill 3761, which would require the Oregon Health Authority and coordinated care organizations to reimburse behavioral health services provided by licensed art therapists, licensed certified art therapists, and provisionally licensed art therapists under the Oregon Health Plan.

I am a Board-Certified and Licensed Art Therapist, currently serving as an Outpatient Clinical Program Manager at New Narrative Integrative Mental Health. In this role, I help oversee care for individuals navigating some of the most complex and persistent behavioral health challenges in our state.

At New Narrative, we provide mental health services for individuals experiencing a wide range of diagnoses, including psychotic disorders such as schizophrenia and schizoaffective disorder, mood disorders such as bipolar disorder and major depression, anxiety and phobias, obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), grief, loss, and difficulty navigating life transitions.

In addition to their mental health needs, many of our service recipients are also experiencing poverty, houselessness, struggles with substance use, limited daily living skills, and a lack of family or social supports. These intersecting challenges require compassionate, creative, and adaptable treatment approaches.

We are proud to serve many individuals enrolled in the Oregon Health Plan (OHP) and regularly bill OHP for behavioral health services. However, despite the effectiveness and clinical necessity of art therapy, services provided by licensed art therapists are not currently eligible for reimbursement under OHP. This creates a critical barrier to access for those who could benefit most from this form of care.

Art therapy is an evidence-based, clinically grounded mental health intervention that is especially effective for individuals who struggle to engage in traditional talk therapy. It provides a safe and powerful outlet for self-expression, emotional processing, and healing—particularly for trauma survivors, children, neurodivergent individuals, and people living with severe mental illness.

Your support of House Bill 3761 will also help reduce redundancy for new graduates and current art therapists who are currently required to hold multiple license types in order to

both practice art therapy and receive insurance reimbursement. It will further streamline administrative processes, reducing costs and duplication across several state regulatory bodies, including the Mental Health and Addiction Certification Board of Oregon, the Oregon Board of Licensed Professional Counselors and Therapists, and the Oregon Health Licensing Office, all of which currently oversee similar aspects of licensing for art therapists.

House Bill 3761 would correct a long-standing inequity by recognizing licensed art therapists as eligible providers under the Oregon Health Plan, expanding access to this vital service, and supporting a more inclusive behavioral health workforce.

I respectfully urge you to pass HB 3761 and help ensure that all Oregonians—regardless of income, background, or diagnosis—can access the full range of effective, evidence-based mental health supports they deserve.

Thank you for your time, service, and continued commitment to improving mental health care in Oregon.

Sincerely,

Kati Hengel, ATR-BC, LAT

Outpatient Clinical Program Manager
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