

April 29th, 2025

Re: HB 3761 Art Therapy Insurance Reimbursement

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

My name is Melanie Szemis, and I am writing to express my support of House Bill 3761 as a student working towards my Master's degree in art therapy at Lewis & Clark in Portland, Oregon.

The services provided by art therapists are comparable to services provided by other mental health professionals, and the training required to become an art therapist is rigorous and comprehensive. In addition to being able to provide compassionate care through traditional verbal interventions, art therapists are also trained in the use of creative materials to develop thoughtful and effective therapeutic interventions which can support individuals experiencing a spectrum of mental health challenges.

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.

As a student pursuing a career in this field, HB 3761 will have an impact on my experience post-graduation, as I enter the workforce as an emerging art therapist next year.

My personal interest lies in supporting individuals experiencing crises as well as individuals living with severe mental health conditions. Already, in my limited clinical experience, I have witnessed the power of art therapy to support individuals from a variety of backgrounds and experiences. Expanding access to these services will support Oregonians across the state in a meaningful way.

I appreciate your time and vote to pass such an important piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Melanie Szemis', with a stylized, flowing script.

Melanie Szemis

Art Therapy Master's Candidate