Background for Letters, Background Materials and Position Papers Related to the Art Therapist License

The American Art Therapy Association is the professional membership organization for practitioners, educators and researchers engaged in the field of art therapy. The Association comprises national and international members and works in concert with its 40 state and regional Chapters.

We appreciate and support the work of (name board or legislative body and/or person) to protect the public’s health and welfare through use of a thoughtful review and licensing process.

This letter is in support of the work of the (State) Art Therapy Association (Acronym) to inform the (entities name) about the qualifications of art therapists that enable them to be properly evaluated as a Licensed Art Therapist. (List other major supporters here)

We want to express the urgency with which we hope this matter will be addressed as highly trained art therapists who reside and practice in the state are seeking to provide much-needed, quality healthcare services to the citizens of this state.

Practicing art therapy members of the American Art Therapy Association are licensed master-level or doctoral-level art therapists, who practice throughout the country under a variety of licensure titles, including as licensed art therapists, counselors, psychologists, occupational therapists, marriage and family therapists and others, depending upon their individual qualifications and practice focus. However the Association is seeking a more unified license title under the banner of Licensed Art Therapist so as to make a more consistent path for review and reimbursement for services nationwide.

The art therapy accrediting body, the Educational Program Approval Board (EPAB), sets standards for art therapy masters’ degree programs. These are stringent standards used to ensure uniformity of education and training for art therapists, along a high level of quality. More than 30 universities and colleges, nationwide, adhere to the EPAB standards.

Art therapy has the unique ability to unlock emotional expression by facilitating non-verbal communication. This is especially useful in cases of impairment of verbal expression that is characteristic of various neurological, psychological and cognitive disorders. These clinical cases frequently arise in the cases of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and Traumatic Brain Injury, dementia in aging adults, those who have experienced physical or emotion trauma, clients struggling with psychotic disorders and children on the autistic spectrum to name a few conditions. Art therapy’s singular benefits and success is increasingly recognized by the medical community as a valuable asset, whether provided in one on one session or by inclusion on interdisciplinary teams that treat people for a wide spectrum of mental and physical disorders.
The (entity addressed) may find it useful to review materials that set forth educational, credentialing and ethical standards for the field of art therapy. These demonstrate that the majority of art therapists graduating from EPAB-accredited master degree programs have had extensive training with clinical internships, and are very well prepared to provide excellent care to their clients. In fact, most graduates meet the licensing requirements for education and training set forth in the Board's rules for licensing professional counselors as well as other mental health professionals. However the unique nature of the practice of art therapy requires its own distinct license as a Licensed Art Therapist.

To view the EPAB “HANDBOOK OF APPROVAL” go to the Association's website for the .PDF file at: [http://www.americanarttherapyassociation.org/upload/epabapprovalhandbook.pdf](http://www.americanarttherapyassociation.org/upload/epabapprovalhandbook.pdf)

In addition to EPAB accreditation for degree programs, graduates apply to the national credentialing body for art therapists, the Art Therapy Credentials Board, Inc. (ATCB). ATCB sets the bar for specific areas of study, the national Art Therapy Credentials Board Examination (ATCBE) examination, and clinical experience levels required to ensure that credentialed art therapists provide the highest level of quality services to the general public. Much like your own mission, ATCB’s is "to protect the public by promoting the competent and ethical practice of art therapy." Professional suffixes used by art therapists after their names signify obtainment of the ATCB credentials: Registration (ATR), Board Certification (ATR-BC) and credentialing as an Art Therapy Certified Supervisor (ATCS). For more details, please go to the ATCB website at: [http://www.atcb.org/](http://www.atcb.org/)

We certainly appreciate your immediate review and action to address the fact that qualified, professional art therapists are being held back from fully practicing their profession in service to the general public because of a lack of the availability of the Art Therapist License.

Please regard the American Art Therapy Association as an easily accessible resource of information and assistance in facilitating approval for art therapists’ licensure. We appreciate your action to resolve this situation and help enable qualified art therapists to provide health services to the citizens of this state.