AMERICAN ART THERAPY ASSOCIATION
NATIONAL POLICY AGENDA

April 26, 2013

The Governmental Affairs Committee, in collaboration with the American Art Therapy Association's Public Policy Director and Executive Director, develops the National Policy Agenda for consideration and approval by the Board of Directors and to assist the Association in focusing actions that support its national positions. The Association’s actions to support those positions are as follows:

PRIORITY I: EMPLOYMENT OF ART THERAPISTS

• VULNERABLE POPULATIONS AND PERSONS
  The American Art Therapy Association advocates for outstanding art therapy services to be provided to vulnerable populations and persons as designated by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The American Art Therapy Association supports the inclusion of art therapy services for vulnerable populations and persons in federal and state policies, legislation, regulations, judicial actions, and initiatives, and their appropriate funding and reimbursement.

  The American Art Therapy Association supports art therapy services and programs for vulnerable populations and persons as designated by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Vulnerable Populations and Persons are defined by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Ongoing Actions

- Provide training to Chapters and members related to Medicaid through a webinar and supporting guide on how to apply to be a provider under Medicaid.
- Develop the advocacy tools needed by Chapters to encourage participation by members in Medicaid.
- Monitor Reimbursement Codes related to art therapy to assist art therapists to gain services reimbursement.
- Support legislation that enables Medicaid to be fully funded to support those with mental health service needs such as the current draft bill Excellence in Mental Health, and similar legislation.
➢ Work to encourage full funding of mental health programs funded through Medicaid.

- **CHILD AND ADOLESCENT ART THERAPY SERVICES**
  
  *The American Art Therapy Association advocates for outstanding art therapy services to be available and provided to children and adolescents, to maximize their physical and mental health, and facilitate their social, emotional, behavioral, and educational development.*

  *The American Art Therapy Association supports the inclusion of art therapy services for children and adolescents in federal and state policies, legislation, regulations, judicial actions, and initiatives, and their appropriate funding and reimbursement.*

**Ongoing Actions**

➢ Work with members of the National Alliance of Specialized Instructional Support Personnel to identify mental health legislation that would positively impact young people and provide an opportunity to connect art therapists to schools, community centers, after school programs, PTA events and similar groups supporting youth education.

➢ Marshall the capacity of Chapters and members in advocating for specific legislation that enables art therapists to be active in providing services for early learning through adolescence.

➢ Actively monitor and support the *Mental Health Awareness and Improvement Act* and similar Congressional legislation to implement school-based mental health programs to provide early identification, assessment, referral and treatment services for children with social, emotional or behavioral problems.

➢ Actively monitor legislation related to mental health that impacts youth including in the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the Elementary & Secondary Education Act.

➢ Annually conduct children’s mental health awareness events with all Chapters.

➢ Enhance the existing K-12 Tool Kit with additional examples and re-launch it with AASA.

**PRIORITY II: STATE LICENSURE FOR ART THERAPISTS**

- *The American Art Therapy Association supports federal and state policies, legislation, regulations, judicial actions, and initiatives that encourage, promote, and support efforts to gain a professional art therapy license and licensure of art therapists.*

**Ongoing Actions**

➢ Target key states in the process of gaining the art therapy license and provide in-depth technical assistance to each. The goal is to draft all key documents including the white paper, the bill and the position paper including compelling facts about the fact that art therapy services are unique and critical.

➢ Develop an assessment tool for gathering comprehensive information from chapters on the status of ongoing efforts to obtain state licensure of art therapists.
➢ Develop a state licensure tool kit to guide Chapters in preparing uniform state licensure proposals and advocating effectively for their adoption by state legislatures (in progress).
➢ Develop a webinar and supporting guide on how to prepare and present the case for art therapy licensure.
➢ Improve communication of information on the progress, issues and challenges of the Chapters’ efforts to obtain state licensure legislation through the e-blasts, websites and GAC committee calls. Launch a new timing and look to all GAC materials.
➢ Provide advocacy training sessions at the Association national conferences.
➢ Launch the annual GAC grant for Chapter Advocacy in September 2013.
➢ Research all states for applicability for the art therapist license and potential of a certificate which is standard in some states. Develop a matrix to track potential.
➢ Develop a framework and guidelines for the GAC mentor program.

PRIORITY III: INSURANCE REIMBURSEMENT OF ART THERAPY SERVICES

➢ U.S. MILITARY PERSONNEL, VETERANS, AND THEIR FAMILIES

_The American Art Therapy Association advocates for outstanding art therapy services to be provided to U.S. military personnel, veterans, and their families. The American Art Therapy Association supports the inclusion of art therapy services for U.S. military personnel, veterans, and their families in federal and state policies, legislation, regulations, judicial actions, and initiatives, and their appropriate funding and reimbursement._

**Ongoing Actions**

➢ Develop a strategy and identify potential partner organizations to seek inclusion of art therapists within an expanded definition of qualified providers of TRICARE covered mental health services for military personnel and their families.
➢ Identify possible strategies for gaining greater access by art therapists to mental health services and positions within the Veterans Affairs Administration’s Hospital and Readjustment Counseling Center networks.
➢ Formalize the Association’s involvement in Veterans Affairs Administration information and related public outreach activities and provide regular reports and updates in AATA newsletters and GAC committee calls.
➢ Explore possible strategies for qualifying art therapy students as eligible for internship stipends in VA Medical Centers and Clinics.
➢ Expand Association contacts with the National Intrepid Center of Excellence and facilitate member access to Center research and information on assessment and treatment of traumatic brain injuries. Support Congressional funding for the continued expansion of ten additional regional centers.

➢ HEALTH SYSTEM REFORM: PATIENT PROTECTION AND AFFORDABLE CARE ACT (PPACA)

_The American Art Therapy Association supports the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (Public Law 111-148, effective May 1, 2010) because the act has the potential to improve access to health care services and insurance, expand healthcare insurance coverage,_
strengthen Medicare, reduce health disparities in vulnerable populations, and improve public health. The American Art Therapy Association will advocate on behalf of the profession of art therapy in the implementation of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. The Association will advocate for the correction of any inconsistencies in implementation of the Act.

Ongoing Actions

- Work with national partner organizations and coalitions in monitoring progress on implementation of the PPACA and identifying potential attempts to revise, repeal or deny funding for key provisions of the Act.
- Advocate against any Congressional actions to repeal, delay or block funding for full implementation of PPACA with national office letters, statements and lobbying and, as necessary, with Action Alerts to Chapters and individual members.
- Respond as necessary to agency request for comments to assure parity treatment and funding of mental health services in program regulations and guidelines.
- Monitor progress on implementing State insurance pools to assure parity treatment of mental health services and seek opportunities to include art therapists as named providers of covered mental health services.
- Develop guidance, if needed, to encourage and assist Chapters to engage in meetings, public forums and regulatory actions on implementing State insurance pools.

PRIORITY IV: COLLABORATION WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

- The American Art Therapy Association is committed to allocating resources wisely to participate in collaborative partnerships with organizations in order to positively impact its membership and the profession of art therapy. The Association will form and continue collaborations only with partner organizations that maintain common goals of integrity, credibility, and protection of the public.

For the greatest impact on federal legislation, the American Art Therapy Association partners with leading national health, arts, and education organizations representing services for people of all ages so as to present a powerful position when addressing national issues of concern to the art therapy profession. The American Art Therapy Association builds its national partnerships based on common interest in health care, the arts, and education support services. In all collaborations, advocacy, and initiatives the American Art Therapy Association works toward inclusion of art therapists as named or allowed providers based upon the ATR-BC and art therapy licensure where available.

Those partnerships include the following groups and their member organizations:

- American Association of School Administrators (AASA): 13,000 school districts across the country;
- Americans for the Arts (AFA): Supports the arts in America by providing programs that meet the needs of over 150,000 members and stakeholders;
Health Professions Network (HPN): Collaborative group of 83 organizations representing allied health professions;
- Mental Health Liaison Group (MHLG): 68 of the top national mental health agencies;
- National Alliance of Specialized Instructional Support Personnel (NASISP): 26 members providing school mental health support services;
- National Coalition of Creative Arts Therapies Associations (NCCATA): Represents over 15,000 individual members of five creative arts therapies associations nationwide; and,
- National Education Association (NEA): 30 organizations serving youth and schools.

The American Art Therapy Association works jointly with these groups to develop advocacy strategies, support for relevant legislation, collaboration on special events, joint advocacy, and collaborative problem solving, and to represent the interests of the art therapy profession.

Ongoing Actions

- **Arts Advocacy Day and surrounding events** to promote the interests of art therapists in providing mental health care services to veterans and youth.
- **Children’s Mental Health Awareness Day and events throughout the May** to draw attention to the need for mental health services from early learning through and beyond adolescence. Chapters are supporting and developing community wide events during May.
- **Legislative collaborations and Briefings throughout the year** in collaboration with NEA, MHLG, AASA, and NASISP which address issues related to youth, vulnerable groups and those with mental health conditions.
- **Participation in actions with HPN** to include allied health professionals in programs and research of the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services.
- **Participation in initiatives that draw attention to and support for programs and research for services for the military, their families and veterans** with NCCATA, MHLG, and AFA.