

March 20, 2016

Madame Chairlady Julie Harhart and the members of the Pennsylvania House Licensure Committee:

Good morning. My name is Melanie Walborn. I am a board certified music therapist, co- chair of the Pennsylvania State Task force of Occupational Regulation for Music Therapy, and a small business owner of WB Music Therapy, a private practice offering music therapy in Dauphin, Lebanon, and Lancaster counties. I am among at least 10 other woman-owned music therapy businesses serving counties like Lehigh, Delaware, Tioga, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Wyoming Susquehanna, Beaver, Allegheny, Bedford, Somerset, Cambria and Blair counties. I will share information today that focuses on the benefits of licensing the music therapy profession in our great Commonwealth.

Defining music therapy and creating this license will not restrict practice in Pennsylvania. On the contrary, passage of this bill is likely to increase opportunities for state agencies, facilities and employers to include music therapy as a treatment option for their constituents. Currently, the inconsistency in state regulations has prevented music therapists from working in the state. Because Pennsylvania regulations do not consistently recognize the music therapy profession and the national credential, board certified music therapists have experienced limitations in providing services in certain healthcare and educational settings. For example, residents of York county are not eligible to receive music therapy through their Managed Care organization because Community Care Behavioral Health does not recognize music therapy as an eligible service option, however, individuals living in neighboring counties like Lancaster and Cumberland, are eligible through their MCO, PerformCare.

The bill, as it is currently written, includes exemption language allowing any and all other professions to use music as part of their work as long as they do not claim to provide "music therapy" or claim that they are a "music therapist". The generalized use of music does not incorporate the same breadth and depth of music as utilized by a board certified music therapist. Music therapists analyze clients non-verbal, verbal, psychological and

physiological responses to music in order to be clinically effective and respond to the needs of the client. In our pursuit of state recognition other professions have claimed that they “incorporate elements of music therapy” in their practice though they are not educated or trained as an MT-BC. If an individual has not undergone the rigorous education, clinical training and certification requirements of a music therapy professional, they should not make these claims, just as a music therapist, would not claim to incorporate elements of speech/occupational/physical therapy in their practice unless they were specifically trained in that field. As such, creating a license to recognize board certified music therapists provides protection for the public by recognizing the education, clinical training and national credential as the requirement for providing music therapy services.

Creating this license will not restrict the supply of practitioners or entry into the profession. In fact, this recognition will likely increase the number of practitioners in the state. Licensure would create a mechanism for public and facility awareness, advocacy for the profession, and improved access to services. Music therapists who relocate from other states would be eligible to work as board certified music therapists in Pennsylvania as we are seeking state recognition of the same national education, clinical training and board certification requirements. Hundreds of graduates each year from the nine university music therapy degree programs will have the confidence to stay in Pennsylvania, seeking work in a place that formally identifies and values the practice of music therapy.

Undoubtedly, the cost of creating a state license is a concern of your committee and the individuals that oversee the finances of our state. Fortunately, state recognition of the MT-BC is cost neutral when structured according to the proposed plan in the current bill language. Start-up and maintenance costs can be covered through licensing fees, which are nominal for the practitioner. The current bill proposes the creation of a board that is comprised of volunteers in order to provide oversight at minimal cost to the state. Additionally, there are no foreseeable increases in costs of service to consumers as a result of regulating music therapy through a state license. The potential for economic growth as a result of regulating the profession is more likely to occur.

Also, music therapy is a cost-effective treatment option and the potential for job growth due to attracting or retaining current and newly trained music therapists will increase with the addition of licensure. State facilities supported by the people of Pennsylvania that provide music therapy services by an MT-BC often experience cost-savings. This is evidenced by the impact of selected music therapy interventions on important cost drivers such as length of stay in Neonatal Intensive Care Units or medical procedural efficiencies in the peri-operative environment. All these factors have a positive impact for constituents.

The benefit of increased governmental intervention in the marketplace will be improved consumer protection and streamlined access to quality services in healthcare and education settings for Pennsylvania residents. The potential for decreased out-of pocket expenses for those receiving services as facilities confidently identify and employ therapists who have met state requirements for professional practice could lead to favorable economic outcomes.

Thank you for your consideration of HB 1438.

Respectfully Submitted,

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