

HOUSE PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE COMMITTEE  
INFORMATIONAL MEETING ON HOUSE BILL 1356  
AUGUST 8, 2023  
TESTIMONY: Allison Broaddrick, MT-BC

Chairman Burns, Chairman Metzgar and members of the Pennsylvania House Licensure Committee:

My name is Allison Broaddrick and I am a board certified music therapist and a small business owner. I was recently awarded the Pittsburgh Business Times 30 under 30 award as well as the Duquesne University Dukes of the Last Decade Recognition. My company, Three Rivers Community Care, was founded in March of 2018 and has grown to employ over 25 individuals in the Pittsburgh region. Three Rivers Community Care is a quickly growing company in the region and is on pace to hit one million dollars in revenue this year, making it one of less than 2% of women owned businesses in the United States that reach that accomplishment.

I truly believe that I have created a beautiful, thriving and inclusive community with my company that benefits so many people, both employees and those we serve. When it comes to music therapy services though, we are unable to be truly inclusive due to the financial cost of services. On a weekly basis I get individuals, parents and loved ones who call seeking music therapy services. I have to explain that unfortunately music therapy is not covered by health insurance and that they would have to private pay for this service. So many individuals try to fight their insurance and those insurances will call us. The question is often "What is your license?" to which we have to reply that while we are nationally credentialed, we hold no license in the state of Pennsylvania.

To see the positive impacts of having access to music therapy services through insurance, I believe that one simply needs to look at the demographics of my company. The music therapy department serves all individuals, but the vast majority of our income comes from contracting with school districts, nursing homes and drug and alcohol rehabs or from waiver based clients: all areas where the clients do not have to pay out-of-pocket for services. I am thankful to the legislature for choosing to include music therapy as an approved service within the consolidated, community living and person and family directed services waivers. This has allowed us to see over 10 clients on a weekly basis that otherwise would not have had access to this service. I understand that 10 clients might not sound like that many, but for those 10 lives, music therapy makes a huge difference. For instance, one of our clients stopped using any form of communication during the covid-19 pandemic. Thanks to our work in music therapy, that client is now able to use picture cards to express yes and no. This allows them to

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express their thoughts and feelings without becoming frustrated and has decreased the amount of behaviors in the household. This individual has not returned to hospitalization since beginning music therapy services in turn saving the taxpayers money.

The lack of licensure goes beyond music therapy services. I've been told by insurance companies that since I am the sole owner of the company and I am not a licensed professional, I would be unable to obtain in network status for my company to hire licensed staff and provide other services that are covered such as occupational therapy, speech language pathology and physical therapy. To my knowledge, there is no other service provider in the Pittsburgh region that specializes in care for adults with intellectual disability and autism for OT, SLP, and PT services. In fact, when trying to seek occupational therapy in the past, one of our clients was told by location after location that they were unable to see that individual due to their disability. While we are attempting to fight insurance to provide an extremely necessary service, the journey would have less hurdles if I as the business owner was a credentialed and licensed professional. This would allow me to not only provide specialized services to those that face what is called the service cliff, but also to create further job opportunities for occupational therapists, physical therapists and speech language pathologists in the region.

A more personal benefit of music therapy licensure is the protection of myself and my company. I recently had the experience of publishing a job posting for a board certified music therapist. Despite having stated on the application multiple times that this was for those holding the MT-BC credential, I had numerous individuals apply for the position who called themselves music therapists with no music therapy education, clinical placements or the MT-BC credential. I even had one applicant go so far as to get in a verbal altercation and threaten to sue me for discrimination. While it would obviously be unfounded, the whole process was unnecessarily stressful and might turn other businesses away from creating jobs for music therapists in Pennsylvania.

When I first became a music therapist, I didn't understand the importance of licensure, but the reality is that with each passing year I realize how much this will protect consumers, families, and small businesses while also creating more employment opportunities and opportunities for growth for music therapists in this state. To end with a personal experience. I founded my company because there were no full time jobs available for music therapists in the greater Pittsburgh area. My mother had terminal cancer at the time and I was left with a choice: change my career and give up the profession I worked so hard for or move to a state with more opportunities and leave my mother, or figure out how to build a private practice. I was blessed to build the practice I

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have today, but I firmly believe that if Pennsylvania grants licensure, opportunities will increase and Pennsylvanians will not have to make the same challenging choice that I made back in March of 2018.

I hope that as you consider licensure in Pennsylvania, you will consider my voice and the voice of so many others sharing that this licensure is exactly what Pennsylvanians need.

Please support efforts to License Professional Music Therapists and place them under the State Board of Social Workers, Marriage and Family Therapists and Professional Counselors by voting "yes" on House Bill 1356.

Allison Broaddrick, MT-BC

CEO

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