

HOUSE PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE COMMITTEE
INFORMATIONAL MEETING ON HOUSE BILL 1356

AUGUST 8, 2023

TESTIMONY: Nicole Hahna, PhD, MT-BC, FAMI

Good morning Chair Burns, Chair Metzgar, and members of the House Professional Licensure committee. Thank you for the opportunity to address the topic of licensure for music therapists in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. My name is Dr. Nicole Hahna and I am a board certified music therapist and a Fellow of the Association for Music & Imagery. As a music therapy educator living in Pennsylvania, as well as the mother of a child who receives music therapy in Pennsylvania, this topic is of vital interest to me and to my profession.

Today, I will discuss two issues regarding the importance of licensing music therapy: First, I will address the education and clinical training of music therapists. Second, I will highlight the appropriateness of the licensure board we are seeking to join as well as the need for licensure in Pennsylvania.

To begin, it is important to note that Pennsylvania has the largest number of higher education institutions in the US with Music Therapy Programs—10 universities. However music therapy has not yet received licensure in PA. The education and clinical training of music therapists is distinctive & comprehensive, preparing music therapists to work with clinical populations from cradle (NICU) to grave (hospice & palliative care). Music therapy education and clinical training involves foundational music coursework such as Music Theory, Conducting, Music History, and Piano, Guitar, & Voice. Our curriculum builds from these foundational skills with coursework in Exceptionalities, Anatomy & Physiology, and Human Development. Next, music therapy specific coursework focuses on the Psychology of Music, Music Therapy Research, Music Therapy Interventions, & Music Therapy Ethics to assist students in developing the theoretical framework they need to use and apply music therapy interventions in a variety of clinical settings.

While completing this coursework, music therapy students undergo a minimum of 180 pre-internship clinical hours. At the end of their coursework, music therapy students complete a 6-month internship, which culminates in a total of 1200 supervised clinical hours (pre-internship + internship). Successful completion of the American Music Therapy Association's (AMTA) academic and clinical training requirements allows candidates to sit for the the national board certification exam provided by the Certification Board for Music Therapists (CBMT) and results in the credential MT-BC (Music Therapist Board Certified).

The AMTA and CBMT has delineated the *Standard of Clinical Practice* for music therapists to include work in the areas of addictive disorders, intellectual and developmental disabilities, educational settings, older adults, medical settings, mental health, physical disabilities, as well as private practice and wellness. As you can see, the education, clinical training, and scope of practice (see "Supplemental Materials" packet) of music therapists involves not only behavioral health but also the medical and educational settings. It is due to this breadth of our clinical practice that is one of the reasons why we are requesting a music therapy license that would outline our specific education, clinical training, and scope of practice in music therapy. Again, the field of music therapy is like no other licensed profession in PA.

At this time, I would like to address the misconception that music therapists in PA "already have access" to a license as a professional counselor. This is incorrect. This common misconception that music therapists can "just apply for the LPC" in PA is due to the fact that the PA LPC board accepts the CBMT exam, in place of the NCE (National Counselor Certification & Exam). The scope of practice of music therapists is NOT covered by the LPC credential and 77% of the clinical practice that music therapists engage in are NOT included under the LPC credential, due to differences in our scopes of practice. In the end, the distinctive nature of both music therapy and professional counseling have scant overlay as noted in my testimony and the "Supplemental Materials" also submitted.

Another misconception that I would like to address is the appropriateness of the licensing board that music therapists are requesting to join. Music therapists practice across the lifespan—not just with neurologic rehabilitation or behavioral health. In this way, we are similar to the approach of social work in terms of the facilities we practice in—hospitals, nursing homes, group homes, schools, and behavioral health facilities. According to AMTA's 2021 Workforce Analysis, music therapists practicing in the following settings: (a) 6% neurologic disorders, (b) 15% medical/surgical, (c) 13% intellectual disability, (d) 7% elderly/Alzheimer's, (e) 23% mental health, and (f) 36% other. Given the variety of clinical settings we practice in, the social work licensure board is the appropriate board for music therapy. And, precedence for music therapists joining the social work, professional counselor, & marriage and family counseling board can be seen with Ohio passing Music Therapy Licensure earlier this year amending Ohio's Counselor, Social Worker, and Marriage and Family Therapist Board.

In summary, music therapy licensure is critical and necessary in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Contrary to some statements you may hear today, there is NO

opportunity in PA for music therapists to apply for licensure that would cover the scope of practice of a music therapist. Without licensure, music therapists in PA are NOT required to follow a code of ethics, as membership in AMTA is voluntary, nor are they required to complete continuing education, as CBMT has no jurisdiction to limit practice in PA. Additionally, there is precedence for music therapists joining the SW, LPC, MFT Licensing board just earlier this year in one of our neighboring states—Ohio. With so many states surrounding Pennsylvania providing music therapy licensure (Ohio, Virginia, Maryland, and New Jersey), we are in danger of training music therapists in PA only to have them leave to other states that have licensure. Thank you for the opportunities to discuss these important issues concerning music therapy.

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