

Testimony submitted via email.

Dear Committee Members,

I am a licensed social clinical worker with over 25 years of experience and am writing to express support for Art Therapy Licensure. I know the value of having a specific license; and while I understand that many Art Therapists are now licensed as Professional Counselors, I also know that art therapy is a powerful and effective treatment that requires rigorous graduate level education and training. I have enormous respect and admiration for the expertise of trained art therapists and of the effectiveness of art therapy in accessing clients strengths as a way to promote reduction of symptoms. I have referred many clients to trained art therapists because it is such a powerful and effective form of therapy.

I do have a concern about an amendment I have heard is being considered. My understanding is that the amendment may allow any mental health practitioner to practice Art Therapy. I agree any mental health practitioner should be able to use art as part of how they work, but art therapy is a specific graduate degree and the public should be protected from clinicians who are not trained and board certified practicing Art Therapy.

I believe this bill will foster growth in the field of art therapy in Oregon and will benefit consumers because it will enhance and regulate the quality of treatment services.

I know that Social Workers and LPC's use art in their clinical work with people. This bill will not prevent them from using art in their work. At the same time I believe it is important that this bill would set art therapists apart as a highly specialized branch of therapy that requires specific training. One should not be able to call therapy Art Therapy unless one is trained and certified as an Art Therapist.

Very truly yours,
Jean K Shirkoff LCSW

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