

To the Coordinator of the Oregon Art Therapy License Task Force:

On behalf of the medical staff of Randall Children's Hospital in Portland, Oregon, I want to express our strong endorsement and support of efforts by the Oregon Art Therapy License Task Force to gain enactment of legislation for licensure of professional art therapists. Our clinical art therapy program has been an integral component of the care provided to children and their families at Randall Children's Hospital.

The role of the art therapist at Randall Children's Hospital is to address the physical and emotional needs of pediatric patients through a variety of healing art experiences. These activities provide opportunities for children to explore problems and potentials, reaffirm their self-image and, in more basic terms, provide them a sense of normalcy. Our art therapists provide assessment and treatment through group sessions, individualized bedside and studio sessions, and facilitate our Artist in Healthcare Program, all of which enable patients and families to experience the therapeutic qualities of creative expression.

The unique role of art therapy in a medical setting is providing children with an opportunity to see themselves not as passive patients, but active partners in the work of getting well. Our art therapists provide tools that allow children to cope with the pain and isolation children must endure, process scary and potentially traumatizing medical experiences, and safely express a range of feelings they may have about their treatment in an often bewildering medical environment. The art therapist is able to recognize themes, concerns, and needs because they are both actively listening to the patient and their partners in the treatment team. One of the unique aspects of art therapy in the hospital setting is its ability to facilitate communication and help build trust.

The philosophy of care at Randall Children's Hospital is to do everything possible to ensure a positive experience for each patient. Art therapy is an important component of that commitment. Highly trained and qualified art therapists, like those involved in the clinical art therapy program at Randall Children's Hospital, deserve the same professional recognition that state licensure provides to all their colleagues in other medical, nursing and allied health specialties. Currently, anyone can practice art therapy in state of Oregon due to the lack of a licensing process. We urge support for legislation to provide a program of professional licensure that will protect and preserve the art therapy profession and insure that all citizens of Oregon receive art therapy services from qualified art therapists.

Sincerely,


Shari Kerr RN BSN