

Mt. Hood Hospice c/o Laura Lirette  
PO Box 1269  
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3/17/25

Re: HB 3761 Art Therapy Insurance Reimbursement

To: Legislature members

I am writing to express my support of House Bill 3761 which requires the Oregon Health Authority and coordinated care organizations to provide reimbursement in the state's medical assistance program for the cost of behavioral health services provided by licensed art therapists, licensed certified art therapists and provisional licensed art therapists.

This legislation is important because it expands access to therapeutic mental health services, providing access to care for the 1.4 million Oregon Medicaid recipients, addressing disparities in care for low-income and underserved communities. Art therapists are trained both in art and psychological theory, on par with other mental health clinicians. The entry to practice requires a Master's degree in Art Therapy, two-years of supervised clinical practice, and passing a board certification exam. This legislation aligns Oregon with the 13 other states that recognize art therapists as qualified mental health providers and it expands the workforce by providing more mental health providers for clients to access services.

I regularly host 3rd year masters Art Therapy students to offer group and individual support as part of the bereavement programs I run for a small not-for-profit hospice in Sandy, OR. The healing, connection and growth that participants experience in the process of these art based groups is incredible. Participants often reflect how challenging it is to put words to their grief and how using visual methods offers relief and release for things that elude words. The art therapy has been so well received that we are hosting our 3rd Grief Made Visible, a grief literacy art and writing exhibit, during the month of April. It allows participants to share their creations in a public space. It allows the community to expand their understanding of how grief unfolds. I've witnessed time and again how powerful the act of creating and sharing has been in the healing of those I work with.

The pieces are glimpses into the profound transformations members experience through the act of creating in a supportive space that fosters conversation and connection. This link is for an interview with a creator from last year's exhibit that aired on OPB's Think out Loud show on 4/3/24: <https://www.opb.org/article/2024/04/03/art-exhibit-in-sandy-centers-experiences-of-grief/>

I heartily endorse Art Therapists of all licensure levels be able to be reimbursed for the incredible work they offer clients.

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A few pieces that were in the 2024 exhibit

