

February 26, 2020

Dear Chairwoman Pendergrass, and Members of Health and Government Operations Committee:

My name is Nina Maria Diana, LCSW-C and I am the Director of Social Work at Clifton T Perkins Hospital Center. While working at CTPHC, I have had the opportunity to work alongside and with board certified music therapists. I am continually impressed with the clinical impact that music therapy has on the lives of the patients I serve. Many of our patients would have no investment into treatment until they were reached via expressive arts therapies such as music and art therapy. I am writing in support of [HB1102], to create a Music Therapist Advisory Committee within the State Board of Professional Counselors and Therapists for music therapy licensure in Maryland.

When I arrived at CTPHC several years ago, we had three music therapists and a robust program. Watching the clinicians gently open the patients up and allow them to process the trauma that they have faced in regards to their life experiences and the commission of their felony level offenses has been remarkable. For these actively psychotic patients who have demonstrated highly dangerous behavior, expressive arts are often the only medium with which they can engage. For those who are actively hallucinating, engaging them with music and then using the momentum and relationship that has developed allows them to use music to process their issues in a way that talking therapy couldn't.

Although many disciplines use music as an adjunct to their treatment, please understand that is NOT music therapy. Music therapy is a specific mode of intervention which allows patients to identify and process issues. Without the creation of a license, I am concerned that mental health institutions will substitute nonprofessionals as music therapists. This is on par with having the clerk at the drugstore prescribe you medications. They may have a general understanding, but things can go bad very quickly.

I believe that the establishment of music therapy licensure in Maryland will help ensure that the patients at CTPHC and throughout the state receive quality music therapy services. There is a significant difference between a board-certified music therapist, with the credential MT-BC, versus an individual claiming to be a "music therapist" who does not have the required training and experience. It is vital to all residents and consumers of healthcare in Maryland that this level of quality be assured through the creation of music therapy licensure.

Please support efforts to establish a Music Therapist Advisory Committee within the State Board of Professional Counselors and Therapists for music therapy licensure by voting "yes" for [HB1102].

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nina Maria Diana, LCSW-C". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Nina Maria Diana, LCSW-C  
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Clifton T Perkins Hospital Center  
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