



Committee: House Health and Government Operations Committee
Bill Number: House Bill 1102
Title: State Board of Professional Counselors and Therapists – Maryland Music Therapists Act
Hearing Date: March 5, 2020
Position: Oppose

The Licensed Clinical Professional Counselors of Maryland (LCPCM) opposes *House Bill 1102 – State Board of Professional Counselors and Therapists – Maryland Music Therapists Act*. This bill would create a new licensing category under the Board of Professional Counselors and Therapists for music therapists.

LCPCM does not support the inclusion of any new licensing categories under the Board of Professional Counselors and Therapists, including the licensing for music therapists. We would ask that there be serious consideration of the following key issues:

- **Resources of the Board of Professional Counselors:** Over the past two years, the Board has made great stride in addressing over 30 recommendations from its 2017 Sunset Review. While we are happy by this progress, the Board is still behind in revising clinical regulations for a number of licensure types, including licensed clinical professional counselors (LCPCs). In practice, we have found that every issue that requires action from the Board specific to one licensure type must wait in a queue, which can sometimes last for years. This means that a change or request to the LCPCs practice act may have to wait while other efforts for Alcohol and Drug Counselors, Art Therapists, etc. are underway. This is due to a historical piece-meal approach in creating and expanding a composite board without assessing the functioning of the board and future capacity.

LCPCM's was pleased to see the Department of Legislative Services come to the same conclusion during their 2019 Sunset Review of the Board, which included the following recommendation:

“Given the additional actions still required to be completed by the board, DLS reiterates its recommendation at this time and notes that the board should be given at least another year to fully implement the recommendations of the report before the General Assembly considers adding more license and/or certification types.”

- **Sustainability of Licensure:** We understand that the number of music therapists is low, although we are unsure of an estimated number. We do not believe there will not be enough music therapists who will pay licensure fees to sustain operating costs for developing and implementing this new licensure category. In the event that this is the case, the Board will need to divert funds and/or staff resources from existing licensing functions to implement this bill.
- **Expands the Scope of the Board Beyond Clinical Behavioral Health Services:** The bill specifies that the “practice of music therapy” does not include the screening, diagnosis, or assessment of any physical, mental, or communication disorder”. It is our understanding that only a small percentage of music therapists work in behavioral health settings, with the majority of music therapists working in other practice settings, including somatic care. In fact, the American Music Therapy Association describes the work of music therapists as assessing the “emotional well-being, physical health, social functioning, communication abilities and cognitive skills through music responses”. Further, the Association references the work of music therapists to address physical disabilities and acute and chronic pain, including mothers during labor.ⁱ Establishing a new licensure category under this board sets a precedent to expand the scope of the Board beyond its expertise of behavioral health.

For these reasons, we would ask that no additional licenses and/or certifications, including music therapists, be added under the Board of Professional Counselors and Therapists.

Thank you for your consideration of our testimony. If we can provide any further information, please contact Rachael faulkner at rfaulkner@policypartners.net or 410-693-4000.

ⁱ <https://www.musictherapy.org/about/find/>