



Committee: House Health and Government Operations Committee
Bill Number: House Bill 233
Title: State Board of Professional Counselors and Therapists – Maryland Music Therapists Act
Hearing Date: January 20, 2021
Position: Letter of Information

The Licensed Clinical Professional Counselors of Maryland (LCPCM) is providing this letter of information for *House Bill 233 – State Board of Professional Counselors and Therapists – Maryland Music Therapists Act*. As introduced, 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 several 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 composition of the Board, by design, was created through a piece-meal approach without assessing the functionality of the Board as licensure categories were added.

To provide a practice example, LCPCM worked with the Board for over 5 years to update the practice act regulations for LCPCs. One of the primary causes for the delay is the divergent needs of the Board in responding to new laws and requirements for other licensure categories, including Alcohol and Drug Counselors, Art Therapists, etc. While we are encouraged that the regulations were posted for public comment late last year, we are still waiting for them to be finalized.

- **Expands the Scope of the Board Beyond Clinical Behavioral Health Services:** 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/>