

American Music Therapy Association

8455 Colesville Rd., Ste. 1000

Silver Spring, MD 20910

Tel. (301) 589-3300

Fax (301) 589-5175

www.musictherapy.org**Certification Board for Music Therapists**

506 East Lancaster Avenue, Suite 102

Downingtown, PA 19335

800-765-CBMT (2268)

Fax (610) 269-9232

www.cbmt.org

January 18, 2021

Re: HB 233

Madame Chair Pendergrass and Members of the Health and Government Operations Committee:

My name is Dr. Dena Register and I am the Regulatory Affairs Advisor for the Certification Board for Music Therapists. Thank you for the opportunity to speak on behalf of the national government relations team of the Certification Board for Music Therapists and the American Music Therapy Association in support of removing barriers to music therapy services by qualified professionals in the state of Maryland.

Despite the numerous health, economic and social challenges of the previous year, music therapy remains an essential service for clients, family members, and healthcare providers as they navigate myriad challenges. Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, music therapists have adapted the delivery of their services and diversified service options to meet emerging needs of clients, family members, and healthcare providers. In addition, music therapy interventions are frequently considered when identifying potential pandemic-related treatment and support services for consumers and healthcare professionals.

In response to a national survey sent to music therapists in June 2020, almost two-thirds of respondents indicated they have added telepractice as a service delivery option, the vast majority of which are live virtual music therapy sessions. This has not only allowed for continuity of services, it has also enhanced therapeutic outcomes and improved family involvement in their loved ones' progress. The majority of survey respondents (75%) agree that clients are responding positively to telepractice music therapy services; in fact, some reported that certain clients are thriving in ways that did not happen when seen in person.

Many respondents noted family members are more involved during sessions, so can witness the work and change that occurs when clients are engaged in music therapy. Survey results also indicated benefits for healthcare providers as well. Music therapists are supporting their coworkers in in-patient and residential settings (e.g. hospitals and long-term care facilities), who express joy and gratitude for the connections made through shared musical experiences during a period of increased isolation and stress.

Officially recognizing music therapy, through state licensure, would protect consumers in Maryland by limiting the potential for harm to citizens, by ensuring that only those who are *qualified* can call themselves “music therapists” or say they offer “music therapy.” Music therapy licensure would create channels for access while also allowing employers, potential employers, and private citizens to feel confident in the training and education of the music therapists they employ to work with their loved ones. Thank you for your consideration of this bill and creating access to services for some of Maryland’s most vulnerable citizens.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dena Register". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dena Register, Ph.D., MT-BC
Regulatory Affairs Advisor, CBMT
dregister@cbmt.org
(785) 218-6115