

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

My name is Ritchie Young, and I am a Music Therapy Intern working in Maryland. At Annapolis Music Therapy, I serve about 100 clients within multiple communities across Anne Arundel County, including older adults, adults with developmental disability, adults in mental health and children with developmental delays. While individuals may not be working towards similar goals, each population is able to excel with the assistance of music therapy. Music therapy has made a difference in the lives of adults, older adults included, by improving quality of life and reality orientation, as well as accessing long-term memory for those with Alzheimer's, dementia, or traumatic brain injuries. When working within the mental health field, I have seen adults and adolescents use music to communicate strong emotions that they may not be able to identify or verbally express in safe, appropriate ways. Music has also helped to build rapport between the music therapist and a previously "unreachable" adolescent by creating a safe space of acceptance, where interactions and exchanges are natural, positively reinforced, and applied to daily life. Practicing music therapy with children can positively impact their education by increasing focus of attention, decreasing anxiety associated with performing or socializing, and increasing communication and social skills. Young children tackle the problem of ageism in our Intergenerational Groups, which provide older residents with exciting and interactive experiences involving music, visuals, movement, and people of all ages. It is clear that music has the ability to change lives of a wide variety of people.

I ask you to please support [HB1102], which will create a Music Therapist Advisory Committee within the State Board of Professional Counselors and Therapists for music therapy licensure. This bill is needed:

TO PROTECT Maryland residents by ensuring that all individuals calling themselves music therapists in our state meet national standards for education, clinical training, certification, and continuing education;

TO IMPROVE access to music therapy services for Maryland residents by allowing institutions who require state recognition to provide those services; and

TO ADDRESS the confusion for healthcare facilities and Maryland residents regarding the difference between music therapists, music practitioners, music thanantologists, and other non-music therapy musicians in healthcare, such as speech-language pathologist.

A state license will provide employers with personnel who are trained, equipped, and held to high standards of ethics and professional practice, and who demonstrate competency through board certification and continuing education activities. Please consider supporting the establishment of a licensure by voting YES for [HB1102].

Sincerely,

Ritchie Young
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