



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**TESTIMONY FOR HEALTH AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS
COMMITTEE**

CHAIR SHANE PENDERGRASS
VICE CHAIR JOSELINE PENA-MELNYK

**HOUSE BILL 1102: STATE BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL COUNSELORS AND
THERAPISTS – MARYLAND MUSIC THERAPISTS ACT**

MARCH 5, 2020

Good Afternoon Chairman Pendergrass and Vice Chair Pena-Melnyk. I am here today to ask for your support for HB 1102 – State Board of Professional Counselors – Maryland Music Therapists Act. This bill would create a state licensure system for Music Therapists ensuring that they are able to receive all the same benefits and are securitized and qualified in the same way their peers in the medical field are. To be specific, music therapy can be used to address patient needs related to respiration, chronic pain, physical rehabilitation, diabetes, headaches, cardiac conditions, surgery, and obstetrics, among others.

I had my first personal experience with it when my son was injured in an accident. He suffered severe injuries to his whole body and in the weeks following the accident he incurred serious pain when his bandages were being changed. He is still recovering today. To put his mind at ease, a Music Therapist used special headphones to play calming music and sometimes country and rap music. I was shocked at his response, but relieved when there was some level of relief and not the constant push of opioids. I felt blessed that day to have someone with the skills to take care of my son, and provide more than what I could in that space.

Not long after, I was at an event and heard a young woman sing the National Anthem. When speaking to her afterwards, she told me she was attending a school out of state to become a Music Therapist, but unfortunately had to go out of state for her degree, and would not be coming back to Maryland to practice. I thought of my son, and all the other Marylanders who would be deprived of this young woman's care, ~~not because of such an innocuous issue as licensure for a practice~~ that I had seen work with my own eyes.

Since then, I have been working with members of this panel, and many others along the way to legitimize the practice of Music Therapy. What I have learned in that time is that we must do better as a State and not hinder progress when our medical challenges are too great. We have gone back and forth from one board to the next to give Music Therapy a home and searched high

and low to no avail, maybe in the same posture as four years ago. In those four years there have been plenty of accidents like my son's. There have been plenty of veterans suffering from PTSD and plenty of victims of substance abuse who have relapsed because the care being applied to them just isn't working. Music Therapy is a powerful tool in modern medicine and to continue to ignore its usefulness because "we just can't do it this year" is unacceptable to me, and I hope it is unacceptable to you as well.

For this reason I am asking for a favorable report on HB 1102. Thank you for your time.