

**American Music Therapy Association**

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**Certification Board for Music Therapists**

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January 21, 2021

Re: SB 82

Dear Chair Pinsky and Members of the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee:

My name is Dr. Kimberly Sena Moore and I am the Regulatory Affairs Associate 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 regarding Senate Bill 82. This bill creates a music therapy license, and as such helps remove barriers to music therapy services by qualified professionals in the state of Maryland.

Officially recognizing music therapy through state licensure, would protect consumers in Maryland by limiting the potential for harm to citizens through ensuring that only those who are *qualified* can call themselves “music therapists” or say they offer “music therapy.” This 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.

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 report that certain clients are thriving in ways that did not happen when seen in person. Many respondents also noted that family members are more involved during sessions, so can witness the work and change that occurs when clients are engaged in music therapy.

Survey respondents also indicated benefits for healthcare providers. Music therapists are supporting their coworkers in in-patient and residential settings such as hospitals and long-term care facilities. These colleagues express joy and gratitude for the connections made through shared musical experiences during a period of increased isolation and stress.

Thank you for your consideration of this SB 82, which will create access to a beneficial therapeutic service for some of Maryland's most vulnerable citizens.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kimberly". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "K".

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