

ART THERAPY

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April 6, 2018

Representative Stephen A. Huffman
Chairman, Ohio House Health Committee
Ohio House of Representatives
77 S High Street, 12th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Chairman Huffman and Members of the Ohio House Health Committee:

The Art Therapy Credentials Board, Inc. (ATCB) enthusiastically supports HB 557 and the efforts to pass legislation to regulate the practice of art therapy within the state of Ohio.

Art therapy is a well-established profession, and the ATCB is the nationally recognized credentialing body that has been registering (ATR) and certifying (ATR-BC) qualified art therapists for 25 years. The National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA) has recognized the ATCB's Board Certified Art Therapist (ATR-BC) credential as an accredited certification program.

Professionally credentialed art therapists provide safe and effective treatment for persons experiencing developmental, medical, educational, and social or psychological challenges. A goal in art therapy is to improve or restore the client's functioning and his/her sense of personal well-being. Art therapy is practiced in mental health, rehabilitation, medical, educational, and forensic settings with diverse client populations in individual, couples, family, and group therapy formats. Because of its effectiveness with individuals for whom traditional "talk" therapy is not successful and because it can frequently enhance the effectiveness of traditional therapy, art therapy programs are included in mental health clinics, hospitals, community agencies, schools, and private practice settings.

A Master's degree is the entry-level education for art therapy. The Accreditation Council of Art Therapy Education (ACATE) in affiliation with the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP) set standards for art therapy education and provide a rigorous accreditation process for Master's level education program to assure graduate of art therapy programs enter professional life with a broad range of competencies required for the practice of art therapy. These competencies include but are not limited to advanced study in psychopathology, assessment, ethical and legal issues in art therapy practice, cultural and social diversity as it relates to the practice of art therapy, therapeutic theories and techniques and their application in different treatment settings, and standards in art therapy practice. Degree requirements also include supervised practicum/internship(s) prior to graduation.

Applying for art therapy credentialing through the ATCB is elective but highly encouraged and valued in the professional community. In 2017, the ATCB provided graduates with an additional credentialing option, the Provisional ATR (ATR-P), which requires the completion of Master's level education and established supervisory arrangements for

post-degree supervision of clinical hours which must be accrued prior to registration (ATR). Applicants for the ATR-P or ATR may apply if they have attended Approved or Accredited Programs or other Master's level educational programs where art therapy coursework and supervised practicum or internships have been obtained. An applicant for art therapy credentialing who has not attended an Approved or Accredited program undergoes a thorough educational review process by the ATCB to assure the applicant has met the ATCB registration (ATR) standards.

Similar to the requirements of the ATR-P, if an art therapist applies for ATR credentialing through the ATCB, post-master's supervised experience and professional references are required. Supervisors and references must hold advanced mental health degrees and credentials. Completing these requirements, along with good ethical standing and adherence to the ATCB *Code of Ethics, Conduct, and Disciplinary Procedures* are required to become a Registered Art Therapist (ATR) with the ATCB.

To become a Board Certified Art Therapist (ATR-BC), the ATR must pass a standardized examination [the Art Therapy Credentials Board Examination (ATCBE)], which is predicated on a national job analysis of the profession, created by a task force of art therapy subject matter experts, updated annually, and meets sound psychometric standards for legal defensibility. In addition to being required for national certification, the ATCBE is administered specifically for the purpose of licensing art therapists in four states. All ATCB credential holders are required to continue to follow the ATCB *Code of Ethics, Conduct, and Disciplinary Procedures*. In addition, for every five years of certification, ATR-BC's must complete 100 hours of continuing education that meets the ATCB Recertification Standards. In 2009, the ATCB began to offer the Art Therapy Certified Supervisor (ATCS) credential for ATR-BCs with substantial training and/or expertise in the supervision of developing art therapists. This is another mark of maturity of the art therapy profession.

Like counseling and other mental health professions, art therapists have mature membership organizations, educational standards established and maintained by an approval board, and a separate and long-standing national credentialing body that includes a certification that has achieved accreditation by a recognized independent organization (NCCA). Educational, experiential, and ethical standards are fundamental aspects on which the art therapy professional builds throughout his or her career. These are all indicative of a mature and thriving profession.

Art therapists provide an important therapeutic option for individuals in need of the professional services they offer. We believe that licensing art therapists will provide a means of protecting those members of the public who are in need of these specific professional services, which can best be provided in a regulated environment established by their state.

On behalf of the ATCB Board of Directors, thank you for this opportunity to document the ATCB's support of HB 557. We invite you to contact the ATCB National Office if you have any questions about the ATCB's role as the national credentialing body for the art therapy profession.

Sincerely,



Barbara Parker-Bell, PsyD, ATR-BC
ATCB President

