

April 13, 2017

Dear Governor John Kasich and Members of the Ohio Legislature,

I am pleased to offer my support for the licensure of Art Therapists and the expansion of access to art therapy services in Ohio. Throughout my experiences as Chief Executive Officer of the Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services (ADAMHS) Board of Cuyahoga County - and personally as a painter - the healing qualities of art making and the unique abilities of an art therapist are well known and supported.

When Counselor and Social Work licensure was approved by our State Legislature in the early 1980's, Art Therapist licensure was part of the initial consideration, but was dropped. As a compromise and recognition of their professional expertise, Art Therapists were grandfathered in and received a licensure for Counseling and/or Social Work.

Since Art Therapists have their own comprehensive training and internships, as well as a unique skill set, I am supporting their request for an official Art Therapist professional license credential.

The profession of art therapy in North East Ohio has a significant history corresponding to the founding of the American Art Therapy Association. In the mid 1960's sensitivity and insightful individuals recognized the healing qualities of art making and using it with verbal therapy. Through the years, specially designed art rooms for clients have been developed, academic training began at Ursuline College, extensive Art Therapy programming was nationally recognized, the Art Studio for patients adapting to and recovering from physical disabilities was launched and the Art Psychotherapy Institute was started. Last year, the Master's in Art Therapy Counseling celebrated its 30th Anniversary and the Art Therapy Studio will be celebrating its 50th this year. The ADAMHS Board of Cuyahoga County is proud to recognize these unique traditions in exploring creative potential in treatment and recovery and monthly honors artists in recovery from mental illness and/or addiction through its Client Artwork Display Program.

Thank you for your consideration of this important request. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at 216-241-3400, ext. 818.

Sincerely,



William M. Denihan
Chief Executive Officer

