

April 9, 2018

Chairman Huffman and members of the Ohio House Health Committee;

I am writing to express my support for HB 557, licensure of art therapy services in Ohio.

In my work as a pediatric epileptologist at Cleveland Clinic, I have seen the power of art therapy as an intervention with my patients. Children with epilepsy are often required to spend several days to a week on a seizure monitoring unit, with electrodes attached to their heads. During this time they are unable to leave their room, and activity is limited. This can be an anxiety provoking time.

Art making with a qualified art therapist not only normalizes the hospital environment, but offers an opportunity for the children to visually express the emotions they may be experiencing. The art created by the children has also been featured in a show at the Beck Center in Lakewood, Ohio. This show offered a way for the artist/patients to share their experiences, educate about life with epilepsy, and grow in pride as they showed their work to family and friends.

Art therapy has become an avenue of research related to epilepsy as well, with one completed study on seizure-related artwork, and one in the works. This points to the high level of education and training required to become an art therapist, which serves the patient and work environment. Licensure is crucial to the expansion of services, as it would ensure competence in the field, as well as open the door for it to become a billable service.

Sincerely,



Elia Pestana-Knight, M.D.