



May 16, 2018

The Honorable Steve Huffman  
Chair, House Health Committee  
77 South High Street  
12<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Chairman Huffman, Vice Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member Antonio, and members of the House Health Committee—

On behalf the Ohio Occupational Therapy Association, I am writing to express our concerns with House Bill 557, which establishes a new license for art therapists in Ohio. Our stance is that licensure for art therapists is unnecessary and that a new license would create regulatory burdens and scope of practice conflicts for occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants.

Art therapy, as defined in HB 557, would create a direct conflict with the current scope of practice for occupational therapy. Specifically, we are concerned that references to 'improving cognitive and sensory-motor function' and 'cognitive function' would place art therapists in direct conflict with occupational therapists. We also believe that language in the bill appears to grant art therapists with the ability to make diagnoses and provide therapeutic interventions. These are activities that should not be granted to practitioners without a more traditional, clinical training.

Our understanding is that art therapists currently practice in hospitals and other settings in Ohio. Therefore, art therapy practice is not being hindered. Many occupational therapy practitioners are required to work in collaboration with or under a prescription from a physician. In the proposed bill, art therapists would not be under similar requirements which may create a consumer risk.

In addition, occupational therapists occasionally utilize art techniques in their practice. Language found at lines 2098 - 2103 in the bill seems to allow for this practice to continue. More direct language should be included that identifies specific licensees and references their Revised Code section. Ultimately, HB 557 is a solution in search of a problem. Previous licensure bills for art therapy, music therapy, and other professions have been rejected due to being unnecessary and creating bureaucratic burden. And in recent years, the General Assembly has focused on consolidating licensure boards and eliminating unnecessary professional licenses as a way to reduce bureaucracy and generate savings for taxpayers.

Given that healthcare facilities across Ohio are already utilizing art therapy services, we believe that the committee should oppose HB 557.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely

Rebecca Finni, DHS, OTR/L  
President

Ohio Occupational Therapy Association