

Final Report on  
Findings and Recommendations  
By the  
Nebraska Board of Health  
on the  
Therapeutic Recreation  
Proposal for Credentialing  
By the  
Nebraska Therapeutic Recreation Association

to the  
Director of Health  
and the  
Nebraska Legislature

July 18, 1988

After listening to testimony from both proponents and opponents of the proposal to license therapeutic recreators, the Board of Health formulated its recommendations on the proposal. Dr. Shapiro moved that the Board of Health endorse the recommendations of the 407 subcommittee of the Board and the technical review committee. Both of these bodies had recommended against approval of the proposal. Janet Coleman seconded the motion. Voting aye were Brown-Arfmann, Rhodes, Coleman, Masek, Nelson, Lefler, Adickes, Williams, Quinn, Kenney, Shapiro, and Clark. There were no nay votes. By this action, the Board of Health had recommended not to approve the proposal.

Most of the discussion on the proposal occurred at the 407 subcommittee meeting of the Board on May 10, 1988. This discussion was reported to the full Board at its May 16, 1988 meeting. During the 407 subcommittee meeting, some Board members expressed the viewpoint that the evidence of harm presented during the review process by the applicant group was insufficient to demonstrate that there was harm to the public inherent in the current practice situation of therapeutic recreation. One Board member stated that the examples of harm cited in the proposal pertained more to an absence of common sense on the part of the practitioner in question than to an absence of appropriate training. This Board member stated that licensure cannot address matters of common sense. This Board member also stated that because therapeutic recreators are usually employed by licensed institutions, the regulatory machinery to address harm is already in place.

Another Board member stated that the examples of harm cited in the proposal seemed to be accidents, and then made the observation that accidents can happen to anyone regardless of their qualifications. This Board member stated that licensing therapeutic recreators would not prevent accidents such as those cited in the proposal. This Board member also stated that since

therapeutic recreators are employed and supervised by licensed facilities, there is no need to create an additional licensing system for them. This Board member felt that the current system of regulation is sufficient to protect the public from harm.

Both of these Board members stated that requiring all therapeutic recreators to get a license would be unnecessarily severe, given the limited services that most practitioners provide. These Board members also stated that the 48-hour training course that is prerequisite for licensure at the technician level is not an appropriate basis for the establishment of a licensing system. They felt that a course of such limited duration could not possibly impart sufficient technical knowledge to those completing the course to justify granting them a license.

Some Board members expressed concern about the cost-effectiveness of the proposal. One Board member expressed concern about the potential impact of the proposal on other occupations that provide therapeutic recreation services. This Board member also expressed concern about the potential impact of the proposal on Western Nebraska, specifically as regards the availability in Western Nebraska of the 48-hour course required for licensure.

Another Board member stated that the current licensure proposal was not cost-effective. However, this Board member added that there might be need to strengthen current nursing home regulations pertinent to the provision of therapeutic recreation services so as to provide the members of the greater public with greater assurance that they are being adequately protected from harm. This Board member did not share the confidence that some Board members expressed as regards effectiveness of current institutional regulation.

Some Board members stated that the applicant group should reconsider state certification as an alternative form of regulation to licensure.

