

Matt Gelvin, Program Manager
Division of Administrative Services
Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services
301 Centennial Mall South
P.O. Box 95026
Lincoln, NE 68509-5026

Dear Mr. Gelvin,

The Nebraska Art Therapy Licensure Coalition is submitting this letter of intent to request that the Department of Health and Human Services initiate a review of the art therapy profession under the Credentialing Review (407) Program. The Coalition is comprised of Nebraskans for the Arts, Concordia University, Nebraska, The Brain Injury Alliance of Nebraska, Heartland Counseling, the Nebraska Arts Council, and individual art therapists.

Art therapy is a specialized, distinct mental health and behavioral science profession that offers a unique approach for assessing and treating a broad spectrum of mental health conditions. Professional practice of art therapy is currently regulated in 16 states, with art therapists now pursuing licensure and regulation in 15 additional states. The profession of art therapy has a scope of practice, academic and clinical training requirements, professional credentialing process, and code of ethics that equal or exceed those of other master's-level mental health professions currently credentialed by the Nebraska Board of Mental Health Practice. The Coalition intends to propose legislation to provide for credentialing of professional art therapists as licensed mental health practitioners under the Mental Health Practice Act with associated certification as professional art therapists.

While many art therapists in Nebraska meet the requirements for and often hold licenses as mental health practitioners or independent mental health practitioners, the lack of a defined scope of practice and certification requirements for practice of art therapy continues to cause confusion and potential harm to consumers seeking qualified providers of art therapy services. This confusion for the consumer is in conflict with the stated purpose of the Mental Health Practice Act, which emphasizes that consumers be assured that their selection of mental health practitioners is based on sound criteria and that the activities of persons offering or providing therapeutic mental health services are regulated in order to protect public health, safety, or welfare.

The Coalition firmly believes that Nebraskans need assurance by the State of initial and continuing professional ability of persons offering and providing specialized art therapy services and that professional practice of art therapy in our state meets all other criteria set forth in LB407 for credentialing review under the first set of evaluation criteria, Evaluation of Proposals for Initial Credentialing of the Members of Unregulated Health Professionals Currently Allowed to Engage in Full Practice.

The applicant group is asking for a waiver of the \$500.00 fee associated with this filing as the Coalition is a grassroots effort composed of nonprofit health, education, and arts advocacy organizations and individuals without formal structure or funding.

Sincerely,


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