



**Testimony of
The Connecticut Occupational Therapy Association (ConnOTA)
By
Morgan Villano, Board Member for Government Affairs
Concerning
Senate Bill 354 – AAC Music and Art Therapy
Before the
Public Health Committee
March 7, 2016**

As Board Member and Chair of Government Affairs for the Connecticut Occupational Therapy Association (ConnOTA), I am writing with concerns in regard to proposed bill 354, “An Act Concerning Music and Art Therapy.”

ConnOTA is generally in support of licensure for music and art therapists. However, ConnOTA is concerned with the broad and vague nature of the definitions provided for Music Therapy and Art Therapy. To ensure that there is a clear distinction of the scope of practice for music therapists and art therapists, ConnOTA requests that consideration be given to the addition of more specific definitions in the following sections.

Section 1(3):

"Music therapy" means the clinical and evidence-based use of music interventions to accomplish individualized goals within a therapeutic relationship by a credentialed professional who has completed a music therapy program approved by the American Music Therapy Association, or any successor of said association; and...

Section 6(3):

"Art therapy" means clinical and evidence-based use of art, including art media, the creative process and the resulting artwork, to accomplish individualized goals within a therapeutic relationship by a credentialed professional who has completed an art therapy program approved by the American Art Therapy Association, or any successor of said association; and...

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Occupational therapy practitioners are professionals with knowledge and skills in the biological, physical, social, and behavioral sciences to work with people across the lifespan. Occupational therapists utilize occupations¹ and activities to promote a client’s health and well-being and participation in life. “Occupational therapy practitioners use therapeutically selected occupations and activities as primary methods of intervention throughout the process” of intervening with clients. Practitioners work with people across the lifespan to ensure they can participate in activities they need and want to do through the therapeutic use of everyday activities. Everyday activities include: activities of daily living (ADLs) (e.g., dressing, grooming); instrumental activities of daily living (IADLs) (e.g., shopping, meal preparation); work; leisure; and wellness (e.g., rest and sleep). (AOTA, 2014).

Music and art are modalities that fall within the scope of practice for occupational therapy practitioners by training and by licensing in the State of Connecticut. Expressive arts, including music and art, have been utilized as a therapeutic modality by occupational therapy practitioners since the beginning of our profession in the the early 1900’s. As such, music and art may be used during occupational therapy treatment as a facilitative approach and/or as the focus of a patient’s/client’s pursuit of goals related to occupation.¹

ConnOTA was therefore pleased to see the provisions within Section 2(c):

The provisions of this section shall not apply to a person who (1) provides music therapy while acting within the scope of practice of the person’s license and training, provided the person does not hold himself or herself out to the public as a music therapist

and Section 7(c):

The provisions of this section shall not apply to a person who (1) provides art therapy while acting within the scope of practice of the person’s license and training, provided the person does not hold himself or herself out to the public as an art therapist



Nonetheless, the lack of specificity in the definitions of Music Therapy and Art Therapy give rise concerns about the potential for confusion regarding scope of practice for the various disciplines. For this reason, ConnOTA will continue to closely follow proposed bill 354.

Thank for the opportunity to comment, and ConnOTA looks forward to working with the proponents of the bill and the entire Public Health Committee to address our concerns.

¹“The term occupation, as it is used in the [Occupational Therapy Practice] Framework, refers to the daily life activities in which people engage. Occupations occur in context and are influenced by the interplay among client factors, performance skills, and performance patterns. Occupations occur over time; have purpose, meaning, and perceived utility to the client; and can be observed by others (e.g., preparing a meal) or be known only to the person involved (e.g., learning through reading a textbook). Occupations can involve the execution of multiple activities for completion and can result in various outcomes. The Framework identifies a broad range of occupations categorized as activities of daily living (ADLs), instrumental activities of daily living (IADLs), rest and sleep, education, work, play, leisure, and social participation” (p. S6)

From American Occupational Therapy Association. (2014). *Occupational therapy practice framework: Domain and process* (3rd ed.). American Journal of Occupational Therapy, 68(Supp1), S1-S48.
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