

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6276

As of February 2, 2012

Title: An act relating to certification of music therapists.

Brief Description: Requiring certification of music therapists.

Sponsors: Senators Conway, Keiser and Pridemore.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Health & Long-Term Care: 2/01/12.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Staff: Veronica Warnock (786-7490)

Background: Music therapy is a health care profession that uses music to address physical, emotional, cognitive and social needs for individuals of all ages. Currently in Washington State, music therapy is not a regulated health profession.

Summary of Bill: No one may practice music therapy or represent themselves as a music therapist unless certified as a music therapist by the Department of Health (DOH). To qualify for certification, an applicant must have successfully completed a bachelor's degree or higher in music therapy and passed an exam administered or approved by DOH.

DOH must adopt rules necessary to implement the chapter. DOH's rulemaking authority includes establishing certification and renewal fees; establishing the forms and procedures necessary to administer the program; evaluating and designating those educational programs which will meet the educational requirement; establishing or approving an exam based on core competencies of music therapy; certifying applicants who have met the requirements and deny certification to applicants who do not; determining which states have credentialing requirements equivalent to Washington and issuing certifications to individuals from those states without examination. DOH is also authorized to hire the necessary staff for implementation and to maintain official records of all applicants and certified individuals.

Music therapists are placed under the Uniform Disciplinary Act for health professions and the Secretary of Health is provided with disciplining authority.

Appropriation: None.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Fiscal Note: Available.

[OFM requested ten-year cost projection pursuant to I-960.]

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Music therapy helps individuals advance physically and cognitively. Those who have a limited ability to communicate can develop, regain, or retain speech through music therapy. Music therapy based programs help keep older adults who struggle with memory loss, dementia, and other physical and cognitive illnesses at home longer, which delays the need for in-patient care and reduces the burden on state resources. Music therapy helps people with autism cope with daily life and become more engaged with society. Certification makes a difference. It will increase access to music therapy services and ensure that people see a qualified board-certified music therapist. First and foremost, music therapists are musicians with extensive education and training in both music and clinical foundations. To obtain an undergraduate degree in music therapy students have to take over two years of music theory, history, composing and arranging, and music technology. They must also study cognitive, developmental, adolescent, and abnormal psychology and take classes in the use of music therapy in developmental disability, mental health, and hospital settings. Certification in Washington State will increase access to those who would benefit from music therapy, ensure that practicing music therapists have adequate education, and help consumers identify qualified music therapists. The Wilson Trust recently provided a legacy gift to expand music therapy services in the Puget Sound region. State recognition will help this gift reach its full potential.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Darnell; Wendy Woolsey, Patricia Catalano, Music Therapist Assn. of WA; Carlene J. Brown, Seattle Pacific University.

Signed in, Unable to Testify & Submitted Written Testimony: PRO: Jim Couture, Encore Adult Day Center; Richard Barrere.