
Health Care & Wellness Committee

HB 1247

Brief Description: Licensing music therapists.

Sponsors: Representatives Reed, Harris, Mena, Berry, Simmons, Morgan, Slatter, Ryu, Goodman, Donaghy, Reeves, Sandlin, Stearns and Fosse.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Establishes music therapists as a new health profession licensed by the Department of Health to provide clinical and evidence-based music interventions.
- Creates the Music Therapy Advisory Committee within the Department of Health to provide expertise on practice standards and professional responsibilities for music therapists.

Hearing Date: 1/24/23

Staff: Christopher Blake (786-7392).

Background:

According to a 2012 sunrise review by the Department of Health (Department), music therapists use music interventions to achieve therapeutic goals by assessing an individual's functioning through response to music; designing music interventions and therapy sessions based on treatment goals, objectives, and the individual's needs; and evaluating and documenting treatment outcomes.

Music therapists may practice as part of an interdisciplinary team that includes medical, mental health, occupational therapy, physical therapy, or educational professionals. Music therapists may work in hospitals, clinics, rehabilitative facilities, mental health centers, residential and day

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facilities, substance use disorder treatment facilities, correctional facilities, schools, or in private practice.

Music therapists are not regulated in Washington. Practitioners may receive training in the practice through the completion of a bachelor's degree in music therapy. In addition, certification is available through national organizations which have their own education, internship, and testing standards.

In December 2012, the Department issued a sunrise review related to a proposal to certify music therapists. In the review, the Department recognized the therapeutic benefit of music to address the cognitive, emotional, physical, social, or functional needs of clients, but found that the proposal did not meet the sunrise criteria to support certification.

Summary of Bill:

Music therapists are established as a new health profession licensed by the Department of Health (Department). To be licensed as a music therapist, an applicant must be at least 18 years old, be in good standing with any other states where the applicant is credentialed to practice music therapy, be currently certified by the Certification Board for Music Therapists, have completed the examination of the Certification Board for Music Therapists, and meet any other requirements determined by the Department. Licenses must be renewed every two years.

"Music therapy" is defined as clinical and evidence-based use of music interventions to accomplish individualized goals of clients by employing certain tools and strategies. These tools and strategies include:

- accepting referrals for music therapy from health care professionals, educational professionals, family members, or caregivers;
- conducting music therapy assessments of clients to determine appropriate music therapy services;
- developing and implementing individualized music therapy treatment plans;
- using music therapy techniques such as improvisation, performance, receptive music listening, song writing, lyric discussion, guided imagery with music, learning with music, and movement to music;
- collaborating, as applicable, with the client's treatment team including physicians, occupational therapists, and mental health professionals;
- evaluating a client's response to music therapy techniques and the individualized music therapy treatment plan and making necessary modifications;
- collaborating with other health care professionals treating a client;
- minimizing barriers that may restrict a client's ability to receive or fully benefit from music therapy services; and
- developing a plan for determining when music therapy services are no longer needed.

If the client has a communication disorder, the music therapist must collaborate and discuss the treatment plan with the client's audiologist, occupational therapist, or speech-language

pathologist. Music therapists may not evaluate, examine, instruct, or counsel on speech, language, communication, or swallowing disorders or conditions, unless they are authorized to practice speech-language pathology. Music therapists may work with clients who have a communication disorder and address communication skills, but may not treat the communication disorder. For clients with a clinical or developmental need, music therapists must review the diagnosis, treatment needs, and treatment of the client with the client's health care providers. When providing educational or health care services, music therapists may not replace the services provided by an audiologist, occupational therapist, or speech-language pathologist. When working with a student for an identified educational need, music therapists must review the diagnosis, treatment needs, and treatment plan with the individualized family service plan's team or the individualized education program's team. "Music therapy" does not include the screening, diagnosis, or assessment of any physical, mental, or communication disorder.

Music therapists are subject to the Uniform Disciplinary Act and the Department is the disciplining authority in any case of unprofessional conduct.

Beginning January 1, 2025, a person may not practice music therapy or use the title of "music therapist" unless the person is licensed as a music therapist. Exemptions are established for: (1) persons credentialed in another health profession that uses music incidental to the practice of that profession; (2) persons whose training and certification attests to the person's preparation and ability to practice that profession without representing themselves as music therapists; and (3) the practice of music therapy as part of an educational program of study in music therapy.

The Music Therapy Advisory Committee (Advisory Committee) is established consisting of five members, including three who practice as music therapists in Washington, one who is licensed to practice a health profession other than music therapy, and one member who is a consumer. The Advisory Committee must provide the Department with expertise and assistance with developing regulations and establishing standards of practice and professional responsibility for music therapists. The Department must consult with the Advisory Committee on issues related to licensure and renewals and provide the Advisory Committee with an annual analysis of disciplinary activities.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.