

# THE NATIONAL OPERA CENTER AMERICA

## ARTS IN HEALTH

### IMPROVING THE HEALTH OF AMERICANS THROUGH THE ARTS

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#### ACTION NEEDED

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##### We urge Congress to:

- **Support programs within the Administration on Aging (AoA) included in the *Older Americans Act Reauthorization Act of 2016* that provide access to creative arts therapies and artist-directed activities for well elderly and individuals diagnosed with Alzheimer’s Disease and other dementias.**
- **Support access to creative arts therapies interventions in behavioral health treatments and services under Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Programs, such as the Medicare Prospective Payment Systems (PPS) and Centers for Medicaid and CHIP Services (CMCS).**

#### TALKING POINTS

- “Arts in Health” includes the professional creative arts therapies disciplines of art therapy, music therapy, dance/movement therapy, drama therapy, psychodrama, and biblio/poetry therapy, all of which are nationally board certified therapies with licensure in selected states, as well as artist-directed applications of visual, literary and performing arts, and design. These creative arts therapists and community artists work together to provide quality, cost-effective services within a wide variety of healthcare and community settings.

#### **Creative Arts Therapies and Artist-Directed Programs Support Healthy Aging**

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- The *Older Americans Act Reauthorization Act of 2016* provides funding for support services, including creative arts therapies; directs funding for behavioral health programs; and requires the Administration on Aging to focus on health and welfare needs of older individuals, which could increase access to creative arts therapies and artist-directed programs.
- The *Older Americans Act* provides opportunities for states and area agencies on aging to increase access to support services and health promotion services for older individuals.
- Research demonstrates the following positive outcomes when creative arts therapies and artist-directed programs are integrated into medical treatment and community prevention and wellness programs:
  - Improved cognitive functioning, including improved communication/socialization and caregiver interaction
  - Reduced reports of pain and anxiety related to illness and invasive treatment
  - Improvements in quality of life, including reduced levels of depression and agitation
  - Decreased need for use of sedatives during medical procedures
  - Decreased use of higher cost medical interventions
- Accessibility to and active participation in the arts provides lifelong learning opportunities and increases the quality of life across the lifespan.
- Community-based cultural programs for older adults reveal positive impacts on maintaining independence and reducing dependency, which appear to reduce risk factors that drive the need for long-term care.

## **Creative Arts Therapies in Behavioral Health Programs**

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- Creative Arts Therapists commonly serve persons with mental health and functional wellness issues in a variety of settings including public and private psychiatric hospitals or schools, mental health centers, private practice, community-based programs, correctional and forensic facilities, and substance abuse treatment programs.
- The Second Lady of the United States, Karen Pence supports art therapy services. Her White House biography states that she “...works to bring attention to issues facing children and families by shining the spotlight on the mental health profession of art therapy... Those who benefit from art therapy include individuals who have survived trauma resulting from combat, abuse, and natural disaster; people with adverse physical health conditions such as cancer, traumatic brain injury, and other health disability; and individuals with autism, dementia, depression, and other disorders.”

## **Creative Arts Therapies Outcomes**

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- Art Therapy is effective at improving functioning, exploring feelings, fostering self-awareness, managing behavior and addictions, and promoting a sense of personal well-being.
- Dance/Movement Therapy is effective at increasing quality of life, improving mood, affect and body image and in decreasing clinical symptoms such as depression and anxiety.
- Music Therapy is effective in reducing muscle tension and anxiety, promoting self-expression, facilitating successful interactions, and developing positive coping skills.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration’s (SAMHSA) Children’s Mental Health Initiative (CMHI) and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility (PRTF) Demonstration Program report the following benefits of Medicaid Home and Community-Based Behavioral Health Services for children and youth:

- Reduced costs of care
- Improved school attendance and performance
- Increase in behavioral and emotional strengths
  - ability to form interpersonal relationships, such as positive connection with family members
  - positive functioning at school
  - ability to demonstrate self-confidence
- Improved clinical and functional outcomes

Increased access to evidence-based creative arts therapies interventions through established behavioral health programs would enhance children and youth’s successful participation in family and community life.

## **BACKGROUND**

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Today, creative arts therapists and community artists work in diverse settings across a wide spectrum of populations, assisting people through all life stages. Besides private for-profit and nonprofit health facilities, settings for this work include, but are not limited to, hospice programs, long-term care facilities, mental health programs, schools, rehabilitation treatment centers, special needs camps, disaster response teams, psychiatric forensic units, veterans’ facilities, prisons, community centers, wellness programs, and military bases.

Economic analyses, cost studies, and clinical research show a positive trend in the use of creative arts therapies and their impact on containing healthcare costs and facilitating functional outcomes achievement. Creative arts therapies and artist-directed programs have the potential to positively impact healthcare spending concerns, quality of care issues, and treatment needs of older adults and individuals seeking behavioral health services.

An investment in “Arts in Health” is an investment in America’s health.