



## 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 for Community Living (ACL) 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 research funding for creative arts therapies and arts in health programs within federal agencies such as the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) within the Department of Health and Human Services as well as the Institute for Education Sciences within the Department of Education.
- Ensure that any healthcare legislation enacted preserves access to affordable healthcare coverage for artists and other creative occupations.

### 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 states & area agencies on aging to increase access to support services and health promotion services, including creative arts therapies.
- Accessibility to creative arts therapies and active participation in the arts:
  - provides **lifelong learning** opportunities;
  - increases **quality of life** across the lifespan;
  - reveals **positive impacts** on maintaining independence and reducing dependency; and
  - reduces risk factors** that drive the need for long-term care.

### Program Examples

- **The Sanford Arts Vermillion (SAV)** supports client wellness through the arts at Sanford Vermillion Medical Center in **South Dakota**. Staff report reduction in negative behaviors, decreased use of antipsychotic medication, and increased wellness and quality of life for nursing home residents involved in arts engagement sessions.
- Dance/movement therapy at **Mercy Health System** in **Pennsylvania** allows for low-income, chronically ill older adults to maintain independence at home for as long as possible, supporting greater quality of life and wellness.

# DANCE | U S A

- **Menorah Center for Rehabilitation and Nursing Care** in **Brooklyn, New York** provides short-term, subacute rehabilitation and long-term nursing care. Utilizing an interdisciplinary treatment team, the creative arts therapies are used specifically for residents with dementia, as drama therapy, and the creative arts therapies, tap into memories, improves communication and provides a calming effect.
- **Iona Senior Services** in **Washington D.C.** offers art therapy to improve cognitive functioning and reduce depression and hospitalization among older-adults who have dementia, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, and other cognitive and physical disabilities. Clinicians integrate mindfulness, meditation and sensory-based interventions such as felting, printmaking, and pottery.

## Research in Creative Arts Therapies and Artist-Directed Programs

- **NEA Interagency Task Force on Arts and Human Development** encourages research opportunities for understanding the arts' role in improving health and educational outcomes throughout the lifespan.
- **NIH and Kennedy Center Sound Health** collaboration brings together leading researchers, music therapists and arts practitioners to better understand the impact of arts on the mind and body.
- A 2017 analysis of data from the federally funded **Health and Retirement Study (HRS)** found that older adults who both created and attended art in 2014 reported better health outcomes (lower rates of hypertension and greater cognitive and physical functioning) than did adults who neither created nor attended art.
- In response to the opioid crisis, the **National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health (NCCIH) at NIH** is funding research that examines the impact of behavioral interventions for prevention and treatment of opioid use disorder and what complementary therapies, including creative arts therapies, may work and how they work to manage pain.

## Outcomes

- Art Therapy is effective in improving cognitive and sensory-motor functions, helping cope with traumatic experience, fostering alternative forms of communication, and reducing conflicts/distress.
- 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.
- Drama Therapy is effective in finding improved socialization and coping skills, rehearsing desired behaviors and finding flexibility in life's roles.
- Music Therapy is effective in reducing pain perception and anxiety, improving mood and quality of life, promoting communication, and enhancing cognitive and physical functioning.
- The aesthetics and design of a medical treatment facility can influence energy consumption, staff performance, and patient recovery.

## Affordable Healthcare Coverage for Artists and other Creative Occupations

The national arts community requests that any efforts to alter the Affordable Care Act maintain:

- Access to affordable individual policies;
- Protections for pre-existing conditions;
- Requirement for coverage of preventative services;
- Consumer protections, essential benefits, and minimum standards of care.



## **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: 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 spending concerns, quality of care issues, and treatment needs of healthcare consumers. An investment in "Arts in Health" is an investment in America's health.