

**ARTS IN HEALTH**  
IMPROVING HEALTH THROUGH THE ARTS

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**ACTION NEEDED**

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**We urge Congress to:**

- **Support the Dignity in Aging Act, H.R.4334, a bipartisan reauthorization of the Older Americans Act, which passed the House, that prioritizes a focus on the arts and cultural experiences.**
- **Support the RISE from Trauma Act, S.1770 and H.R.3180, bipartisan legislation to improve identification and support of children and families who experience trauma, including support for local and state arts agencies.**
- **Support research funding for creative and expressive arts therapies and arts-based programming within federal agencies such as the National Institutes of Health (NIH), National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), and Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).**
- **Preserve *Affordable Care Act (ACA)* provisions that provide access to affordable healthcare coverage for artists and other creative occupations.**

**TALKING POINTS**

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**Creative Arts Therapies and Arts-Based Programming Support Healthy Aging and Trauma-Informed Practice**

- **In Connecticut and Minnesota, drama therapists with ALIVE** work on interdisciplinary teams to provide trauma-informed, prevention-based support to students and schools, K–12.
- The cities of **Coral Springs** and **Parkland, Florida**, received a \$1 million Bloomberg Philanthropies' 2018 Public Art Challenge grant to cover an ongoing weekly art therapy group at the **Coral Springs Museum of Art** in addition to five temporary art installations for collective healing and reflection.
- In collaboration with individuals from the department of social work at **Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond**, a board-certified music therapist facilitates the **RVA Street Singers** a community-based choir for homeless and near homeless elders, including persons with addictions.
- Dance/movement therapy utilizes trauma-informed care at **Providence House Domestic Violence Services in New Jersey** to allow survivors of domestic violence and their children to address posttraumatic symptoms, experience positive growth as a family, and heal from trauma.
- The **Adirondack Center for Writing's Prison Writing Program** offers classes focused on creative writing, literacy, and professional development at the Federal Correction Institute in **Ray Brook, New York**. Launched over 20 years ago, this program is funded by a combined National Endowment for the Arts and Federal Bureau of Prisons grant.
- The **Cherokee Nation's Indian Child Welfare program in Tahlequah, Oklahoma**, was awarded a \$10,000 NEA grant in 2019 to expand its art therapy program for tribal foster children and will use the funds to cover a weekly art therapy group and one-on-one art therapy sessions for 55 foster children over the course of 11 months.
- **InnovAge LIFE in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania**, offers dance/movement therapy as part of community-based services that provide all-inclusive care for older adults and keeps them engaged, active, and living independently in the community and out of long-term care facilities for as long as possible.
- **Urban Voices Project of LA**, holds free weekly music classes to help vulnerable people living in **Los Angeles' Skid Row homeless community** gain a sense of purpose and move towards improved health, including a choir that performs locally and provides participants with a modest income stream.

## Research in Creative Arts Therapies and Arts-Based Programming

- **NIH** is funding opportunities to **examine music's ability to improve human health**. The Sound Health initiative, a partnership between NIH, The Kennedy Center, and the National Endowment for the Arts, intends to: 1) promote understanding of the basic mechanisms through which music is processed by the brain and body; 2) explore how music impacts health and physiology, and 3) facilitate rigorous music intervention studies to treat disease symptoms. Longer-term, the Sound Health Network will also consider the feasibility of exploring how other art forms, in addition to music, may connect with brain and wellness issues.
- The **Rhode Island State Council on the Arts** has partnered with the **Rhode Island Department of Health** and **Brown University School of Public Health** to investigate how the arts can positively impact health and can work in concert with clinical practices. Guided by a 25-member community advisory group, this initiative is mapping the evidence of arts-based healthcare interventions to see the connections between interventions and populations, existing gaps, areas of uncertainty, and entry points of great opportunity.

## 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 promotes healthy aging by increasing social engagement, enhancing coping skills and sense of self, cultivating support systems, engaging the senses, promoting nostalgia, and complements a multi-disciplinary approach.
- Drama Therapy is effective in finding improved socialization and coping skills, rehearsing desired behaviors, and finding flexibility in life's roles. It is known to have clinical efficacy with varied populations including autism spectrum, addiction, major mental illness, eating disorders, children, trauma, older adults, oncology, sexual offenders, and many others.
- Music Therapy reduces agitation, improves cognitive functioning and mood, enhances socialization, and facilitates rehabilitation through increased motivation and engagement in treatment.
- 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

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### 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
- Consumer protections and essential benefits
- Requirement for coverage of preventative services
- Minimum standards of care

## BACKGROUND

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"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 variety of healthcare and community settings. Creative arts therapists and community artists work in diverse settings across a wide spectrum of populations, assisting people through all life stages. Settings include hospitals, hospice programs, long-term care facilities, mental health programs, schools, rehabilitation treatment centers, disaster response teams, psychiatric forensic units, prisons, community centers, and wellness programs.

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 arts-based programming 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.

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