Advocacy and Licensure:
Lessons Of the Past Two Years and
Future Directions

Discussion by
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AATA Public Policy Position & Priority

- **National Policy Agenda:** (2013)

The American Art Therapy Association supports federal and state policies, legislation, regulations, judicial actions, and initiatives that encourage, promote, and support efforts to gain a professional art therapy license and licensure of art therapists.

- **Public Policy Priority** (2014)

Priority in AATA’s Government Affairs advocacy will be given to obtaining separate art therapy licenses in as many states as possible.

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Of 40 States with AATA Chapters or Members interested in Licensure in 2014:

- 15 states adopted CACREP-accredited or Equivalent Program Degree Requirements for Counseling Licenses
- 10 States recognized CACREP program degrees as qualifying candidates for Licensure
20/20 Vision of the Future of Counseling

“Developing a unified profession and helping promote a core identity as a counselor first and a specialty area second is the preeminent professional challenge of the next decade...imagine if every state licensure board required its licensees to graduate from a CACREP-accredited program and attain the same supervision, experience and examination requirements.”

- Bradley Erford, President-elect, American Counseling Association (2012)
Counseling Licensure Changes Since 2014

- 5 Additional States have adopted CACREP-only degree requirements for counseling licenses.

- 5 States have adopted CACREP-accredited or Equivalent program degree requirements for licensure.

- 2 States are in the final stages of adopting CACREP-accredited degree requirements.
Counseling Licensure Changes Since 2014

- Additional states may automatically convert to a CACREP-only degree requirement with NBCC’s decision to require CACREP program degrees for national counselor certification in 2022.

Currently only 6 of the 40 States have not taken steps to require or recognize CACREP-accredited program degrees for counseling licenses.
Chapter Advocacy - 2016

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Issues and Challenges: A Changing Regulatory Environment

- Federal Court Rulings against restrictive Licensing Boards actions as anti-competitive and denying of individual rights

- Obama Administration pressure on States to remove restrictive licensing requirements to expand entry-level licensure and employment

- Increasing State insistence on National Accreditation and Certification to provide credential reviews

- Political demands that professional training be more accountable to market needs and student employment

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Issues and Challenges: Inconsistent Licensure Approaches

Initial Approach of seeking art therapy licenses that are comparable to states’ professional counseling licenses is proving problematic:

- Art therapists are pursuing different licenses from state to state
- Leaving behind art therapists who cannot meet/are discouraged by higher licensing requirements
- Inconsistent with some states’ preference for licensure based on professional certification
- Creating barriers to transferring licenses between states

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Issues and Challenges: Changing State Approaches to Licensure

States now looking to Professional Certification to simplify licensure and replace individual credential reviews

- **Connecticut**: legislation to license both art and music therapists based on National Credentials

- **Delaware**: Licensing Agency urging State Certification rather than licensure

- **Vermont**: Sunrise Report suggesting licensure to assure initial and continuing competency based on Art Therapy Board Certification
Issues and Challenges: Inconsistent Role for the ATCB Exam

- In current art therapy statutes and draft bills, the BC exam must play multiple and inconsistent roles:
  - As an entry-level competency exam
  - As an culminating test of academic knowledge and acquired clinical skills for professional practice
  - As a proficiency exam for higher-level clinical practice

- ATCB has clarified the BC Exam is intended as a culminating exam of acquired competencies from academic training and extended practice
Issues and Challenges: Problems for Program Accreditation

- Outcomes-based Program Accreditation focuses on external outcome measures (employment, licensure, certification, etc.) to document graduate preparation for entry-level practice.

- CAAHEP requires reporting of graduate performance on outcome measures in first 12 to 16 months following completion of graduate degrees.

- Required supervised practice for ATCB Certification and most current or proposed art therapy licenses does not allow consistent reporting of this outcome data.
In Summary:

✓ AATA members are pursuing inconsistent licensure approaches in different states based on the licensing structures available or the level of other mental health licenses.

✓ The ATCB Exam is having to play inconsistent roles in different state licensure proposals.

✓ The potential effectiveness of art therapy program accreditation is being questioned for lack of outcome measures that document graduate performance.
Questions for Moving Forward

Issues and Challenges require consideration of whether licensure, certification and program accreditation can be better structured and coordinated to reinforce and promote the goals of each process

Some Specific Questions:

1. Should art therapy licenses continue to try to duplicate existing mental health licenses or provide a different license approach better suited to the profession?
Questions for Moving Forward

2. Can a single art therapy license or proficiency exam adequately reflect the competencies required for both entry-level practice and advanced clinical practice?

3. Should there be a consistent professional entry-level license for art therapists in all States?
Questions for Moving Forward

4. Should there be a higher-level license or designation, in addition to an entry-level license, to qualify art therapists for clinical practice or independent practice?

5. Should requirements for art therapy licenses and certification be more accessible for program graduates to permit their use as accreditation outcome measures?
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COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS