

Message to the All Creative Arts Therapists and Supporters:
Two Calls to Action

Dear Creative Arts Therapists and Supporters:

We are writing you with important updates regarding the NJ Drama Therapists and Dance/Movement Therapists Licensing Act (A1220 / S675). We have two critical Calls to Action at the end of this message.

After many years of hard work and persistence, this bill passed successfully through both legislative houses and all committees. When it arrived at Governor Murphy's desk, the governor Conditionally Vetoed the bill, making recommendations for changes in how the Creative Arts Therapies would be regulated in NJ. The governor has recommended that a new Creative Arts Therapies Board be created in NJ, and the regulation of ALL the Creative Arts Therapies in NJ be under this Board, instead of the State Board of Marriage and Family Therapy Examiners.

[Click here to read the full text of the Governor's recommendations:](#)
[Copy of Governor Murphy's Statement on A1220](#)

When we became aware of the Governor's recommendations, the Boards of the North American Drama Therapy Association (NADTA) and the American Dance Therapy Association (ADTA) reached out to the American Art Therapy Association (AATA) in an effort to come together to identify a mutually beneficial path forward. Unfortunately, the NJATA decided to take action without an attempt at collaboration and issued a Call to Action to their NJ members that included misleading information. In this letter, we address and correct this misinformation in order to encourage our community of Creative Arts Therapists to collaborate: we are more alike than different.

Our responses to each of NJATA's points:

1. As stated in Bill A1220 / S675, the definitions of Dance/Movement Therapy and Drama Therapy are parallel to the definition of Art Therapy:
 - Dance/movement therapy means the integrated use of dance/movement and psychotherapeutic principles in a creative process that furthers the emotional, physical, cognitive, and social integration of the individual by utilizing, as a behavioral health discipline, the application of fundamental mental health, psychological, developmental, and mind/body principles.
 - Drama therapy means the integrated use of psychotherapeutic principles, theater, and creative processes to further the emotional, physical, cognitive, and social integration of the individual. As a behavioral health discipline, the application of

fundamental mental health, psychological, developmental, and mind/body principles are synthesized in an experiential process.

2. Like art therapy, the structures of the drama and dance/movement therapy professions closely align with professional counseling and marriage and family therapy, with similar master's degree requirements, supervised clinical training, national program accreditation, credentialing and certification.

3. Drama Therapists and Dance/Movement Therapists are mental health clinicians, with training and educational requirements that match those of art therapy, and other mental health professions in the state. We have also worked for years toward obtaining licensure in NJ originally seeking regulation under the State Board of Marriage and Family Therapy Examiners. However, Governor Murphy's conditions to regulate all creative arts therapies under one unified Creative Arts Therapies Board appears to be the only way to create licensure for all creative arts therapists. It also provides a potential opportunity for us to advocate for separate licenses for each CAT profession under one unified board.

4. As Governor Murphy has stated in his Conditional Veto statement:

“Given that both forms [art therapy and drama and dance/movement therapy] use a creative art as a therapeutic tool, having two separate bodies regulate each therapy is inefficient and unnecessary... Rather than creating different advisory committees for each creative arts-related therapeutic modality, I recommend the creation of one unified board that will regulate and license practitioners of the various types of creative arts therapies: The State Board of Creative Arts Therapies. This board would regulate art therapy, drama therapy, dance/movement therapy, and any other creative arts therapy modality that in the future is determined to merit regulation through licensure.”

IMPORTANT: The Governor does not articulate in his Conditional Veto that all of the CAT disciplines will share one license title under The State Board of Creative Arts Therapies and we will continue to advocate for a **unique license title** for each discipline.

5. We understand that this change may potentially create a delay in the creation of a license for art therapy; however the end result would be the opportunity for licensure of all the creative arts therapists in NJ. This, in turn, would benefit and protect the consumers in NJ, providing access to a wide variety of beneficial and effective treatments.

6. Drama Therapy and Dance/Movement Therapy also have high standards of education, clinical practice, and licensing requirements, much the same as art therapy. Regulation of all our professions under a unified Board of Creative Arts Therapies would serve to protect the public, by insuring that these high standards are met and demonstrate equity and respect among the CAT disciplines.

**** CALL TO ACTION #1:**

This is a time-sensitive issue. We urge you to call and email these legislators today even if you don't live in New Jersey

Everyone (not only New Jersey Residents)

Ask them to **place Bill A1220 / S675 on the Assembly and Senate Floor for a vote.**

Contact:

-Assembly Speaker: Assemblyman Craig J. Coughlin AsmCoughlin@njleg.org

-Senate President: Stephen M. Sweeney SenSweeney@njleg.org;

-Assemblyman John F. McKeon AsmMcKeon@njleg.org

-Senator Christopher Bateman SenBateman@njleg.org

NJ Residents Only

Ask your representatives to move this bill into law by voting YES .

HOW TO IDENTIFY YOUR LEGISLATORS: First, identify your legislative district by clicking here [NJ Leg District List](#). Locate your town or municipality on the legislative map. Then click on your district and a list of all of your legislators will come up.

****CALL TO ACTION #2:**

We recommend that you reach out to the Board of Directors of your professional associations and let them know how strongly you feel about uniting with your fellow CAT's. We must work together, for the strength of all and the benefit of NJ citizens. **Do not oppose** the Governor's recommendations for Bill A1220 / S675. If we work together, those who will "win" are the citizens of NJ. Let your association's Board of Directors know that you care, and that you

believe in the power of collaboration. *This bill has the potential for all CAT's to have a form of licensure that works for each distinct discipline if we work together.*

We are doing our best to take action with the information as we receive it. We will keep everyone informed as we continue to gain clarity and deeper understanding of the options before us. We thank you for your support and active participation in this important step towards licensure for **ALL** Creative Arts Therapies in NJ in service of the protection of all consumers in NJ.

The New Jersey Drama Therapy and Dance/Movement Therapy Licensure Task Force

American Dance Therapy Association

North American Drama Therapy Association