

ARTS IN HEALTHCARE

STRENGTHENING OUR NATION'S HEALTH THROUGH THE ARTS

ACTION NEEDED

We urge Congress to:

- Request the Government Accountability Office (GAO) conduct a study to assess the current status of federal support of creative arts in healthcare programs to improve the quality of healthcare services.
- Identify creative arts in healthcare research priorities within agencies such as the National Institutes of Health, Administration on Aging, Veterans Affairs, and Department of Defense to study the cost-effectiveness of creative arts in healthcare interventions for critical populations including, among others, older adults, individuals with autism, military members and veterans diagnosed with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, Traumatic Brain Injury, and other conditions.
- Address, through policy support, increased access to creative arts in healthcare programs under the reauthorization of the Older Americans Act.

TALKING POINTS

ARTS IN HEALTHCARE is a multidisciplinary field dedicated to improving the healthcare experience by providing quality, cost-effective services that achieve positive outcomes for patients, families, and caregivers.

Quality Care

- A GAO study would provide a much needed status report on creative arts in healthcare programs in our federal healthcare system. Such an assessment has not been conducted to date. As Congress members respond to the healthcare concerns of our nation, their policy decisions should be based on research and driven by systematic data collection relating to the condition of healthcare and the arts, the practices that improve service delivery, and the effectiveness of federal support of creative arts in healthcare programs.
- Older adults, individuals diagnosed on the autism spectrum, military members, and veterans are critical populations whose treatments require our nation's thoughtful consideration. The rapid growth of these populations in recent years heightens awareness that our healthcare system needs more treatment options that are successful and cost-effective. Existing research demonstrates that creative arts in healthcare interventions have a positive impact on patient outcomes and provide cost savings not only for these critical populations, but for other patient groups as well.
- Studies have shown creative arts interventions to have these effects on a variety of patient populations:
 - Reduced length of hospital stay (Zhan & Miller, 2003),
 - Fewer medical visits (Pennebaker, 2004),
 - Reduced pain and anxiety (Tan, Yowler, Super, and Fratianne, 2010),
 - Increased self-esteem and reductions in stress (Ho, 2005),
 - Reduced healthcare-related infection rates (The Center for Health Design, 2003),
 - Decreased use of sedatives during medical procedures (Walworth, 2005),
 - Reduced levels of depression and improvements in quality of life (Bar-Sela, Atid, Danos, Gabay, and Epelbaum, 2007), and
 - Decreased use of medical interventions covered by Medicare among the aging (Cohen, 2009).
- Previous federal research grant awards for creative arts in healthcare programs have ranged from \$2,500 to more than \$500,000.

Improved Cost Control

- In these difficult economic times, it is imperative to explore cost-effective options for delivery of quality healthcare services. Creative arts in healthcare practitioners employ cost-efficient and effective treatment strategies that contribute to positive outcomes and interdisciplinary team success.
- Economic analyses and cost studies show a positive trend with respect to the use of creative arts practices in containing healthcare costs, such as length of stay, patient compliance, and staff retention
- A secondary benefit of creative arts in healthcare settings is consistently achieving high levels of patient and caregiver satisfaction, including positive trends in staff recruitment and retention.

TALKING POINTS (CONTINUED)

Increased Access

- Professionals in the creative arts, neuroscience, and gerontology are at an important juncture with respect to advances in quality care and services for the aging population. The potential to make important contributions to help older adults is significant.
- Suggestions for building on the success realized from previous Older Americans Act creative arts therapies projects include:
 - Expanding access within prevention and wellness programs,
 - Assisting with service delivery for older adults with diverse needs through home and community-based programs,
 - Recognition of the vital role the creative arts services play in healthy aging, and
 - Continuation of provisions related to advancing the understanding of the efficacy and effectiveness of creative arts interventions through research, education, training, and information dissemination.

BACKGROUND

ARTS IN HEALTHCARE is a rapidly growing field that integrates the arts, including literary, performing, and visual arts and design, into a wide variety of healthcare settings for therapeutic, educational, and expressive purposes. Research confirms that the arts enhance coping, thereby reducing patients' need for hospital care and pain medication and their associated costs. In addition, the arts reduce patients' level of depression and situational anxiety, contribute to patient satisfaction, and improve the medical providers' recruitment and retention rates.

Clinical areas currently demanding increased attention within the U.S. healthcare system include the aging baby boomer population, individuals diagnosed on the autism spectrum, and military members and veterans diagnosed with conditions such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Traumatic Brain Injury. Research outcomes of creative arts in healthcare interventions for these critical populations demonstrate improved quality and effectiveness of care, enhanced psychosocial and physical health, decreased agitation, increased response to rehabilitation treatment, and improved caregiver coping skills.

Creative arts practitioners work in diverse settings across a wide spectrum of populations, literally serving persons from cradle to grave. Besides private for-profit and nonprofit health facilities, settings 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.

Current federal statutes provide opportunities to address this quality of care issue—such as the Older Americans Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act as well as various research activities at the National Institutes of Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Health Resources and Services Administration within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. There is a need to increase access to these services by expanding the list of creative arts treatments eligible for reimbursement through the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

Older Americans Act (OAA)

Since 1992, creative arts therapies have been identified within the Older Americans Act as both supportive services and as disease prevention and health promotion services. These innovative services are recognized as valid treatment options in programs offered through institutions of higher education, local educational agencies, and community-based organizations, including multigenerational programs. In previous OAA reauthorizations, creative arts therapies were specifically included in research and demonstration projects as well as education, training, and information dissemination projects.