

National Recognition of Art Therapy among Decision Makers



By Clara Keane | Feb. 15, 2018 | [Advocacy](#)

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The AATA has seen significant increased interest in art therapy among decision makers across various levels of state government. Within the last year, art therapy has been represented in national events and initiatives by the National Lieutenant Governors' Association (NLGA), the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), and the United States Conference of Mayors (USCM). Through the AATA's advocacy work for the profession, we are strengthening our collaborations with Americans for the Arts (AftA). National representation for art therapy among decision makers is valuable to the AATA as we work at the local level with our chapters on legislation and rulemaking in 22 states and the District of Columbia during the 2018 legislative sessions and hope to initiate legislative efforts in at least five additional states this year.

National Lieutenant Governors' Association (NLGA)



In a [press release](#) on July 28, 2017, the NLGA announced *The State Military &*

Veterans Arts Initiative, a joint initiative with AftA. Fourteen NLGA members signed the agreement with the goal "to promote the use of arts and arts therapy with the nation's military continuum." The press release acknowledges the original signors, "the lieutenant governors of Connecticut, Delaware, Missouri, Montana, New Mexico, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Tennessee, Vermont, Washington, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, the Mariana Islands, and the secretary of state of Arizona." Read more about the joint Initiative online through on the [NLGA website](#).



From left: Jay Dick, AftA Senior Director of State and Local Government Affairs; NM Lt. Governor John A. Sanchez; AATA President Christianne Strang, PhD, ATR-BC; AATA President-Elect Carlock Russo, EdD, LCAT, ATR-BC; Immediate Past President Donna Betts, PhD, ATR-BC; and AATA Board Member Gretchen Miller, ATR-BC, ATCP.

The NLGA is the professional association for the elected officials first in line of succession to the governors in the 50 states and five U.S. territories. NLGA members are influential in their states and have diverse responsibilities. Approximately half of the NLGA members preside over the state senates, most pursue legislative initiatives, and some serve on the governors' cabinets.

AATA chapters pursuing licensure in states that have signed onto this initiative have been able to use this information to support efforts for art therapy legislation in participating states.

One of the original signers, Lt. Governor John A. Sanchez of New Mexico joined the AATA at our 48th annual conference in Albuquerque, NM in November, 2017. He participated in "Lobbying 101," a presentation by Jay Dick, Senior Director of State and Local Government Affairs for AftA.

The AATA is very appreciative of Lt. Governor Sanchez's continued support of our chapter, the New Mexico Art Therapy Association (NMATA). On February 5, 2018, he introduced them as his guests on the Senate floor. On the following day, chapter members met with NM Superintendent of Insurance John Franchini. Since art therapists are licensed in New Mexico, NMATA members are focused now on acquiring insurance reimbursement.



NMATA chapter members on the New Mexico Senate Floor (from left): Deborah Good, PhD, ATR-BC, ATCS, LPAT, LPCC; Michelle Murphy, MA; Valerie Valentine, ATR-BC, LPAT, LPCC, CSAT; Kirstie Newman, ATR-BC, LPAT; Magdalena Kartick, ATR-BC, LPCC; Keadron Finn Friar, ATR-BC, LPCC, LPAT; Sarah Grace, MA, LPAT; Bethany Moore-Garrison, MA, LMHC; and Deborah Schroder, ATR-BC, LPAT, LPCC.

National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL)



On December 11, 2017 the AATA participated in AftA's panel presentation entitled "The Arts and Well Being Across the Military Continuum" at the NCSL Capitol Forum in San Diego, California.

Deborah A. Good, PhD, ATR-BC, ATCS, LPAT, LPCC, AATA Past-President made the case for art therapy licensure in every state. Read Dr. Good's article "[The Case Made for Art Therapy Licensure at the 2017 National Conference of State Legislatures](#)" in *Art Therapy Today* for a full report of the event.

The National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) is a bipartisan non-governmental organization that serves the members and staff of state. The NCSL's mission is to (1) Improve the quality and effectiveness of state legislatures; (2) Promote policy innovation and communication among state legislatures; and (3) Ensure state legislatures a strong, cohesive voice in the federal system. All state legislators and staff members are automatically members of the NCSL.



(From left) Rebecca Vaudreuil, EdM, MT-BT and Deborah Good, PhD, ATR-BC, before their panel presentation.

United States Conference of Mayors (USCM)

During the US Mayors 86th Winter Meeting morning plenary on January 26, 2018, Robert Lynch, President and CEO of AftA, addressed the USCM as AftA's "longest, and most valued collaboration." He spoke briefly on the value of the arts and thanked the USCM for their advocacy support and collaboration to save the National Endowment of the Arts (NEA) from the proposed elimination for FY 2018. He also thanked the mayors for their collaborations with the State Military &



Veterans Arts Initiative (the USCM adopted a [resolution](#) in June 2016 in support of Funding Arts and Healing Therapy Across the Military Continuum) and the Creative Forces program with the NEA and the Department of the Defense.

As the guest of honor, U.S. Second Lady Karen Pence spoke about her initiative, *Art Therapy, Healing with the HeArt*. Mrs. Pence said, "As Second Lady of the United States, I chose one initiative to champion, and it is art therapy." During her twenty-minute remarks, she shared the definition of the profession, emphasized that "it is not arts and crafts," and noted the rigorous education requirements for entry in the field. From her conversations with clients, art therapists, and other health care professionals during visits of art therapy facilities and education programs across the country and the globe, Mrs. Pence shared inspirational stories of individuals whose lives were changed by art therapy. Pence's remarks can be [viewed here](#) and the full breakfast awards ceremony is available [here](#).

The USCM is the official non-partisan organization of cities with populations of 30,000 or more (there are over 1400 such cities in the U.S. today). Each city is represented in the Conference by its chief elected official, the mayor.

The AATA looks forward to continuing to be a resource for legislators and organizations interested in learning about and promoting art therapy.

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