



**The Dale Association Outpatient
Counseling and Treatment Center**

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Testimony for the 2024 NEW YORK STATE EXECUTIVE BUDGET for HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE

My name is Elizabeth Siclari, LCAT, ATR and I work as **the Senior Clinician** at **The Dale Association Outpatient Counseling and Treatment Center**. I also work privately I am an LCAT, ATR with over 7 years of experience.

I am grateful to the Governor and legislature for the increased attention to the mental health needs of New Yorkers and the shortage of therapists to care for them. Our treatment team is interdisciplinary and includes social workers, MDs, NPs, psychologists, and NYS licensed mental health practitioners including LCATs (Licensed Creative Arts Therapists).

We currently employ **2** Licensed Creative Arts Therapists who work on the front lines of our mental health crisis.

I am submitting this testimony on behalf of myself and our organization due to urgent concern that the proposed Health and Mental Hygiene Bill Part Q be amended to include LCATs who are currently providing essential mental health care to many of our most vulnerable New Yorkers. There is a great need and we have heard that there are not enough providers working with Medicaid consumers. LCATs have experience with this population and can immediately help close the gap in care.

Excluding nearly 2000 licensed providers undermines the state's ability to solve the current crisis. We at **The Dale Association Outpatient Counseling and Treatment Center** deeply value the front-line psychotherapy services our LCATs provide to our **clients**, many of whom struggle with: **PTSD, severe anxiety, major depressive disorder, and other persistent mental health illnesses.**

LCATs have specialized skills and training in providing psychotherapy to those who are not effectively served by talk therapy methods. This includes people from different cultures, non-English speakers, BIPOC, and LGBTQI+ communities. Creative arts therapists are often the first responders after events of unspeakable traumas like mass violence and natural disasters, in working with young children exposed to violence and abuse, and with youth and adults, including veterans who have PTSD.

I have been working with a 12-year-old female for a few months and she has not responded well to just talk psychotherapy. When I began incorporating art therapy skills and techniques, she was more open and felt safer to disclose some trauma she experienced. Without the use of art therapy in sessions it would have been very difficult to make this child feel safe enough to disclose her trauma and why she has had a change of demeanor and an increase in mental health symptoms, which were becoming detrimental to her quality of life.

Please include these highly qualified, highly effective existing mental health professionals in this very important bill.



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