

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE BILL

No. 579 Session of  
2025

INTRODUCED BY VOGEL, COMITTA, KEARNEY, HAYWOOD, FONTANA, COSTA,  
HUTCHINSON, TARTAGLIONE, SCHWANK, CAPPELLETTI, A. WILLIAMS,  
CULVER, SANTARSIERO, ROBINSON, FLYNN AND J. WARD,  
APRIL 9, 2025

REFERRED TO CONSUMER PROTECTION AND PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE,  
APRIL 9, 2025

AN ACT

1 Amending the act of July 9, 1987 (P.L.220, No.39), entitled "An  
2 act licensing and regulating the practice of social work;  
3 providing penalties; and making an appropriation," providing  
4 for licensing and regulating the practice of music therapy;  
5 and making editorial changes.

6 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
7 hereby enacts as follows:

8 Section 1. The title and sections 1 and 2 of the act of July  
9 9, 1987 (P.L.220, No.39), known as the Social Workers, Marriage  
10 and Family Therapists and Professional Counselors Act, are  
11 amended to read:

AN ACT

12  
13 Licensing and regulating the practice of social work, marriage  
14 and family therapy, professional counseling and professional  
15 music therapy; providing penalties; and making an  
16 appropriation.

17 Section 1. Short title.

18 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Social

Workers, Marriage and Family Therapists [and], Professional Counselors and Professional Music Therapists Act.

Section 2. Legislative intent.

The practice of social work, marriage and family therapy [and], professional counseling and professional music therapy within this Commonwealth is hereby declared to affect the public safety and welfare and to be subject to regulation and control in the public interest to protect the public from unprofessional, improper, unauthorized and unqualified practice of licensed social work, licensed marriage and family therapy [and], licensed professional counseling and licensed professional music therapy. This act regulates only those who hold themselves out as licensed social workers, licensed clinical social workers, licensed marriage and family therapists [or as], licensed professional counselors or as licensed professional music therapists. Acquisition of a license under this act shall not be made a condition of the employment of a person by the Commonwealth or any of its political subdivisions or by nonprofit agencies.

Section 2. The definition of "board" in section 3 of the act is amended and the section is amended by adding definitions to read:

Section 3. Definitions.

The following words and phrases when used in this act shall have the meanings given to them in this section unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

\* \* \*

"Board." The State Board of Social Workers, Marriage and Family Therapists [and], Professional Counselors and Professional Music Therapists under the Bureau of Professional

1 and Occupational Affairs within the Department of State.

2 \* \* \*

3 "Independent practice of music therapy." The application of  
4 professional music therapy knowledge and skills by an  
5 individual:

6 (1) who styles oneself as a professional music  
7 therapist;

8 (2) who regulates and is responsible for the  
9 individual's own practice and treatment procedures; and

10 (3) whose practice is not affiliated with any other  
11 practice, health care facility, government agency or  
12 government-regulated social service agency.

13 \* \* \*

14 "Licensed professional music therapist." A person who  
15 engages in the practice of music therapy and who holds a current  
16 license under this act.

17 \* \* \*

18 "Practice of music therapy." As follows:

19 (1) The clinical and evidence-based use of music  
20 interventions to accomplish individualized goals for  
21 individuals of all ages and ability levels within a  
22 therapeutic relationship by a licensed professional music  
23 therapist. Professional music therapists develop an  
24 individualized music therapy treatment plan for a client or  
25 group of clients that identifies the goals, objectives and  
26 potential strategies of the music therapy services  
27 appropriate for the client or group of clients using music  
28 therapy interventions, including, but not limited to, music  
29 improvisation, receptive music listening, song-writing, lyric  
30 discussion, music and imagery, music performance, learning

1 through music and movement to music.

2 (2) The term includes:

3 (i) Accepting referrals for music therapy services  
4 from medical, developmental, mental health or education  
5 professionals, family members, clients, caregivers or  
6 others involved and authorized with provision of client  
7 services.

8 (ii) Conducting a music therapy assessment of a  
9 client to determine if treatment is indicated. If  
10 treatment is indicated, the licensed professional music  
11 therapist collects systematic, comprehensive and accurate  
12 information necessary to determine the appropriate type  
13 of music therapy services to provide for the client.

14 (iii) Developing an individualized music therapy  
15 treatment plan for a client that is based upon the  
16 results of the music therapy assessment.

17 (iv) Carrying out an individualized music therapy  
18 treatment plan that is consistent with other medical,  
19 developmental, rehabilitative, habilitating, mental  
20 health, preventive, wellness care or educational services  
21 being provided to a client.

22 (v) Evaluating a client's response to music therapy  
23 and the individualized music therapy treatment plan,  
24 documenting change and progress and suggesting  
25 modifications, as appropriate.

26 (vi) Developing a plan for determining when the  
27 provision of music therapy services is no longer needed  
28 in collaboration with the client, a physician or other  
29 provider of health care or education of the client, the  
30 family or caregiver of the client and any other

1 appropriate person upon whom the client relies for  
2 support.

3 (vii) Minimizing barriers to ensure a client may  
4 receive music therapy services in the least restrictive  
5 environment.

6 (viii) Collaborating with and educating the client  
7 and the family or caregiver of the client or any other  
8 appropriate person about the needs of the client that are  
9 being addressed in music therapy and the manner in which  
10 the music therapy addresses those needs.

11 (ix) Utilizing appropriate knowledge and skill to  
12 improve the practice of music therapy, including the use  
13 of research, reasoning and problem-solving skills to  
14 determine appropriate actions in the context of each  
15 specific clinical setting.

16 (3) The term does not include:

17 (i) The screening, diagnosis or assessment of any  
18 physical, mental or communication disorder.

19 (ii) A person whose training and national  
20 certification attests to the person's preparation and  
21 ability to practice the certified profession or  
22 occupation, if the person does not represent that the  
23 person is a music therapist.

24 (iii) The practice of music therapy as an integral  
25 part of a program of study for a student enrolled in an  
26 accredited music therapy program, if the student does not  
27 represent that the student is a music therapist.

28 (iv) A person who engages in the practice of music  
29 therapy under the supervision of a licensed professional  
30 music therapist, if the person does not represent that

1           the person is a music therapist.

2           \* \* \*

3           "Professional music therapist." A person who has acquired  
4 the necessary education and qualifications to apply to be a  
5 licensed professional music therapist under this act and engage  
6 in the practice of music therapy in this Commonwealth.

7           \* \* \*

8           Section 3. Sections 4, 5 heading, (a), (c) and (1) and 6(2)  
9 and (3) of the act, amended March 28, 2024 (P.L.11, No.4), are  
10 amended to read:

11 Section 4. License required.

12           It shall be unlawful for any person to [hold oneself forth  
13 as] represent that the person is a licensed bachelor social  
14 worker, licensed social worker, licensed clinical social worker,  
15 licensed associate marriage and family therapist, licensed  
16 marriage and family therapist, licensed associate professional  
17 counselor [or], licensed professional counselor or licensed  
18 professional music therapist unless [he or she] the person shall  
19 first have obtained a license pursuant to this act.

20 Section 5. State Board of Social Workers, Marriage and Family  
21 Therapists [and], Professional Counselors and  
22 Professional Music Therapists.

23           (a) Creation.--There is hereby created the State Board of  
24 Social Workers, Marriage and Family Therapists [and],  
25 Professional Counselors and Professional Music Therapists, a  
26 departmental administrative board in the Department of State.  
27 The board shall consist of [13] 15 members who are citizens of  
28 the United States and who have been residents of this  
29 Commonwealth for a two-year period, two of whom shall be public  
30 members; five of whom shall be licensed social workers, at least

one of whom shall be a licensed clinical social worker and at least one of whom shall be a licensed social worker; two of whom shall be licensed marriage and family therapists; two of whom shall be licensed professional counselors; two of whom shall be licensed professional music therapists with a master's degree or higher in music therapy or a related field; one of whom shall be either a licensed marriage and family therapist or a licensed professional counselor whose membership shall rotate between those professions at the expiration of the member's second term; and one of whom shall be the Commissioner of Professional and Occupational Affairs.

\* \* \*

(c) Initial appointments.--Within 90 days of the effective date of this act, the Governor shall nominate one professional member to serve as a clinical social worker member of the board; three professional members to serve as professional counselor members of the board, one of whom shall serve a two-year term, one of whom shall serve a three-year term and one of whom shall serve a four-year term; two professional members to serve as the marriage and family therapist members of the board, one of whom shall serve a two-year term and one of whom shall serve a four-year term[.]; and two professional members to serve as the licensed professional music therapist members of the board, one of whom shall serve a two-year term and one of whom shall serve a four-year term. The professional members of the board initially appointed pursuant to this subsection need not be licensed by the licensure examination adopted by the board but, at the time of appointment, must have satisfied the education and experience requirements of this act for licensure as a clinical social worker, a marriage and family therapist [or], a

1 professional counselor or a licensed professional music  
2 therapist.

3 \* \* \*

4 (1) Operating procedures.--The board shall meet within 30  
5 days after the appointment of its new members and set up  
6 operating procedures and develop application forms for licensing  
7 clinical social workers, associate marriage and family  
8 therapists, marriage and family therapists, associate  
9 professional counselors [and], professional counselors and  
10 professional music therapists. It shall be the responsibility of  
11 the board to circulate these forms and educate the public to the  
12 requirements of licensing in order to hold oneself out as a  
13 licensed bachelor social worker, licensed social worker,  
14 licensed associate marriage and family therapist, licensed  
15 clinical social worker, licensed marriage and family therapist,  
16 licensed associate professional counselor [or], licensed  
17 professional counselor or professional music therapist within  
18 [the] this Commonwealth.

19 Section 6. Powers and functions of board.

20 The board shall have the following powers:

21 \* \* \*

22 (2) To adopt and, from time to time, revise such rules  
23 and regulations as may be necessary to carry into effect the  
24 provisions of this act. Such regulations may include, but  
25 shall not be limited to, standards of professional practice  
26 and conduct for licensed bachelor social workers, licensed  
27 social workers, licensed clinical social workers, licensed  
28 associate marriage and family therapists, licensed marriage  
29 and family therapists, licensed associate professional  
30 counselors [and], licensed professional counselors and



1 professional music therapist in Pennsylvania.

2 (3) To examine for, deny, approve, issue, revoke,  
3 suspend or renew licenses of bachelor social workers, social  
4 workers, clinical social workers, associate marriage and  
5 family therapists, marriage and family therapists, associate  
6 professional counselors [and], professional counselors and  
7 professional music therapist pursuant to this act and to  
8 conduct hearings in connection therewith.

9 \* \* \*

10 Section 4. Section 7 of the act is amended by adding a  
11 subsection to read:

12 Section 7. Qualifications for license.

13 \* \* \*

14 (h) Professional music therapist license.--An applicant  
15 shall be qualified for a license to hold oneself out as a  
16 licensed professional music therapist, provided the applicant  
17 submits proof satisfactory to the board that:

18 (1) The applicant is of good moral character.

19 (2) The applicant has completed the education and  
20 clinical training requirements established by the American  
21 Music Therapy Association or any successor organization.

22 (3) The applicant provides proof of passing the  
23 examination for board certification offered by the  
24 Certification Board for Music Therapists or any successor  
25 organization or provides proof of being transitioned into  
26 board certification, and provides proof that the applicant is  
27 currently a board certified music therapist.

28 (4) The applicant remains actively certified by the  
29 Certification Board for Music Therapists.

30 (5) The applicant has submitted an application

1 accompanied by the application fee.

2 (6) The applicant has not been convicted of a felony  
3 under The Controlled Substance, Drug, Device and Cosmetic  
4 Act, or of an offense under the laws of another jurisdiction,  
5 which, if committed in this Commonwealth, would be a felony  
6 under The Controlled Substance, Drug, Device and Cosmetic  
7 Act, unless:

8 (i) at least ten years have elapsed from the date of  
9 conviction;

10 (ii) the applicant satisfactorily demonstrates to  
11 the board that the applicant has made significant  
12 progress in personal rehabilitation since the conviction,  
13 such that licensure of the applicant should not be  
14 expected to create a substantial risk of harm to the  
15 health and safety of the applicant's clients or the  
16 public or a substantial risk of further criminal  
17 violation; and

18 (iii) the applicant otherwise satisfies the  
19 qualifications contained in or authorized by this act.

20 As used in this paragraph, the term "convicted" shall include  
21 a judgment, an admission of guilt or a plea of nolo  
22 contendere.

23 Section 5. Sections 8(b) and 10(a) of the act, amended March  
24 28, 2024 (P.L.11, No.4), are amended to read:

25 Section 8. Procedures for licensing.

26 \* \* \*

27 (b) Issuance of license.--The board shall issue to each  
28 person who meets the licensure requirements of this act a  
29 certificate setting forth that such person is licensed to [hold  
30 oneself out as] represent that the person is a licensed bachelor

1 social worker, a licensed social worker, a licensed clinical  
2 social worker, a licensed associate marriage and family  
3 therapist, a licensed marriage and family therapist, a licensed  
4 associate professional counselor [or], a licensed professional  
5 counselor or professional music therapist.

6 Section 10. Reciprocity.

7 (a) General rule.--The board shall have the power to grant a  
8 reciprocal license to an applicant who is licensed or certified  
9 as a bachelor social worker, social worker, clinical social  
10 worker, associate marriage and family therapist, marriage and  
11 family therapist, associate professional counselor [or],  
12 professional counselor or professional music therapist in  
13 another state and has demonstrated qualifications which equal or  
14 exceed those required pursuant to this act in the determination  
15 of the board, provided that no license shall be granted under  
16 this section to an applicant unless the state in which the  
17 applicant is licensed affords reciprocal treatment to persons  
18 who are residents of this Commonwealth and who are licensed  
19 pursuant to this act.

20 \* \* \*

21 Section 6. Section 10.1 of the act is amended by adding a  
22 subsection to read:

23 Section 10.1. Endorsement of out-of-State licenses.

24 \* \* \*

25 (d) Professional music therapist license.--The board may  
26 issue a professional music therapist license without examination  
27 to an applicant holding a professional music therapist license  
28 in another state who submits proof satisfactory to the board of  
29 all of the following:

30 (1) The applicant is of good moral character.

1       (2) The applicant meets the educational requirements,  
2       including clinical training as specified in section 7(h).

3       (3) The applicant holds a music therapy license that is  
4       in good standing from another state.

5       (4) The applicant has, at a minimum, been actively  
6       engaged in the practice of music therapy for five of the last  
7       seven years immediately preceding the filing of the  
8       application for licensure by endorsement with the board.

9       (5) The applicant has submitted an application  
10       accompanied by the application fee.

11       (6) The applicant has not been convicted of a felony  
12       under The Controlled Substance, Drug, Device and Cosmetic  
13       Act, or of an offense under the laws of another jurisdiction,  
14       which, if committed in this Commonwealth, would be a felony  
15       under The Controlled Substance, Drug, Device and Cosmetic  
16       Act, unless:

17               (i) at least ten years have elapsed from the date of  
18               conviction;

19               (ii) the applicant satisfactorily demonstrates to  
20               the board that the applicant has made significant  
21               progress in personal rehabilitation since the conviction,  
22               such that licensure of the applicant should not be  
23               expected to create a substantial risk of harm to the  
24               health and safety of the applicant's clients or the  
25               public or a substantial risk of further criminal  
26               violation; and

27               (iii) the applicant otherwise satisfies the  
28               qualifications contained in or authorized by this act.

29       As used in this paragraph, the term "convicted" shall include  
30       a judgment, an admission of guilt or a plea of nolo

1     contendere.

2     Section 7. Section 12 of the act, amended March 28, 2024  
3     (P.L.11, No.4), is amended to read:

4     Section 12. Reinstatement of license.

5     Unless ordered to do so by Commonwealth Court or an appeal  
6     therefrom, the board shall not reinstate the license of a person  
7     to practice as a bachelor social worker, social worker, clinical  
8     social worker, associate marriage and family therapist, marriage  
9     and family therapist, associate professional counselor [or],  
10    professional counselor pursuant or professional music therapist  
11    to this act, which has been revoked. Any person whose license  
12    has been revoked may apply for reinstatement, after a period of  
13    at least five years, but must meet all of the licensing  
14    qualifications of this act, including the examination  
15    requirement, if [he or she] the person desires to practice as a  
16    bachelor social worker, social worker, clinical social worker,  
17    marriage and family therapist [or], professional counselor or  
18    professional music therapist pursuant to this act at any time  
19    after such revocation.

20    Section 8. The act is amended by adding a section to read:

21    Section 16.7. Practice of music therapy and restrictions on use  
22         of title "Licensed Professional Music Therapist."

23    (a) Before treatment.--

24         (1) Before providing music therapy services to a client  
25         for an identified clinical or developmental need, the  
26         licensed professional music therapist shall review with the  
27         health care provider involved in the client's care the  
28         client's diagnosis, treatment needs and treatment plan.

29         (2) Before providing music therapy services to an  
30         individual for an identified educational need, the licensed

1 professional music therapist shall review with the  
2 individualized family service plan team or individualized  
3 education program team the individual's diagnosis, treatment  
4 needs and treatment plan.

5 (b) During treatment.--

6 (1) When providing music therapy services to a client,  
7 the licensed professional music therapist shall collaborate,  
8 as applicable, with the client's treatment team, including  
9 physician, psychologist, licensed social worker or other  
10 mental health professional.

11 (2) When providing music therapy services to a client  
12 with a communication disorder, the licensed professional  
13 music therapist shall collaborate and discuss the music  
14 therapy treatment plan with the client's audiologist or  
15 speech-language pathologist. When providing educational or  
16 health care services, a licensed professional music therapist  
17 may not replace the services provided by an audiologist or a  
18 speech-language pathologist. Unless authorized to practice  
19 speech-language pathology, music therapists may not evaluate,  
20 examine, instruct or counsel on speech, language,  
21 communication and swallowing disorders and conditions.

22 (c) Use of title.--Only individuals who have received  
23 licenses as licensed professional music therapists under this  
24 act may style themselves as licensed professional music  
25 therapists and use the letters "L.P.M.T." in connection with  
26 their names. It shall be unlawful for an individual to style  
27 oneself as a licensed professional music therapist, a music  
28 therapist or use any words or symbols indicating or tending to  
29 indicate that the individual is a licensed professional music  
30 therapist or a music therapist without holding a license in good

1 standing under this act.

2 (d) Construction.--Nothing in this section shall be  
3 construed to prohibit a person who is licensed or certified to  
4 practice a profession by a Commonwealth agency or board from  
5 practicing within the scope of that license or certificate or as  
6 otherwise authorized by law so long as the person does not  
7 represent themselves as a music therapist.

8 (e) Communication disorders.--A licensed professional music  
9 therapist may not represent to the public that the licensed  
10 professional music therapist is authorized to treat a  
11 communication disorder. This does not prohibit a licensed  
12 professional music therapist from representing to the public  
13 that the licensed professional music therapist works with  
14 clients who have a communication disorder and addresses  
15 communication skills.

16 Section 9. Section 17(b) of the act is amended to read:

17 Section 17. Penalties.

18 \* \* \*

19 (b) Civil penalty.--In addition to any other civil remedy or  
20 criminal penalty provided for in this act, the board, by a vote  
21 of the majority of the maximum number of the authorized  
22 membership of the board as provided by law, or by a vote of the  
23 majority of the duly qualified and confirmed membership or a  
24 minimum of three members, whichever is greater, may levy a civil  
25 penalty of up to \$10,000 on any current licensee who violates  
26 any provision of this act, on any person who engages in the  
27 independent practice of clinical social work, the independent  
28 practice of marriage and family therapy [or], the independent  
29 practice of professional counseling or the independent practice  
30 of music therapy without being licensed pursuant to this act or

on any person who [holds himself or herself out as] represents  
that the person is a licensed bachelor social worker, licensed  
social worker, licensed clinical social worker, licensed  
marriage and family therapist, licensed professional counselor  
[or], marriage and family therapist or licensed professional  
music therapist without being so licensed pursuant to this act.  
The board shall levy this penalty only after affording the  
accused party the opportunity for a hearing, as provided in  
Title 2 of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes (relating to  
administrative law and procedure).

\* \* \*

Section 10. Sections 18(b) and 20(a) of the act, amended  
March 28, 2024 (P.L.11, No.4), are amended to read:

Section 18. License renewal; records and fees.

\* \* \*

(b) Records.--A record of all persons licensed to practice  
as bachelor social workers, social workers, clinical social  
workers, associate marriage and family therapists, marriage and  
family therapists, associate professional counselors [and],  
professional counselors and music therapists in Pennsylvania  
shall be kept in the office of the board and shall be open to  
public inspection and copying upon payment of a nominal fee for  
copying the record.

\* \* \*

Section 20. Unlawful practice.

(a) Unlawful practice prohibited.--It shall be unlawful for  
any person to engage in the independent practice of clinical  
social work, the independent practice of marriage and family  
therapy [or], the independent practice of professional  
counseling or the independent practice of music therapy or [hold



1 ~~oneself out as]~~ represent that the person is a licensed bachelor  
2 social worker, licensed social worker, licensed clinical social  
3 worker, licensed associate marriage and family therapist,  
4 licensed marriage and family therapist, licensed associate  
5 professional counselor [~~and~~], licensed professional counselor  
6 and licensed professional music therapist without possessing a  
7 valid, unexpired, unrevoked and unsuspended license issued under  
8 this act.

9 \* \* \*

10 Section 11. This act shall take effect in 60 days.