Good afternoon,

My name is Karen Urquhart and I am the Community Resource Coordinator for the Macomb County office of the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services in Macomb County.  I found your contact information through the American Art Therapy Association and am reaching out to you to seek your expertise.

 Our Department has caseworkers in select school districts where high levels of school truancy and poverty are present. These caseworkers, called Success Coaches, work very hard to assist students with improving school attendance, education, self-sufficiency and health outcomes. This program is called Pathways to Potential.  In Macomb County, we have Success Coaches through the Pathways to Potential Program in both the Mt. Clemens and Van Dyke School Districts.

 As part of our effort to improve health outcomes-especially as related to mental health issues that we are seeing in the elementary schools, we are seeking to pilot art therapy classes at one of our Elementary Schools in the Van Dyke School District.  Of the research that I have done, it’s quite clear that there are numerous benefits for children to have exposure to art therapy. We are hoping to use these benefits to help children that are dealing with ADHD, anxiety, depression, and other issues and provide them with healthier ways to express, balance and regulate their emotions & behavior.

 Many of these students are living in poverty and experiencing ongoing family dysfunction.  Many cannot make it throughout the school day without acting out, often to the point where they have to be routinely removed from the classroom. As you can imagine, this is extremely difficult for the teachers to instruct and for the other students to focus and concentrate.

 Specifically, we are seeking a qualified art therapist to provide Art Therapy classes as a way of looking at alternative methods to help these students with their behavior. We would also certainly appreciate any ideas you may have to help bring art therapy to these at risk students. We are looking at biweekly classes for about 10-12 students. The school setting is at McKinley Elementary in Warren. The principal and school social worker are very much on board with this proposal. As far as funding goes, we are looking to find someone who is a registered Medicaid provider and who could bill Medicaid as part of the student’s Mental Health plan. My program can cover the cost of the art supplies.

My contact information is listed below. Thank you for your time.

Respectfully,

Karen Urquhart

Community Resource Coordinator

MDHHS-Macomb County Central Administration

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