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Licensure Efforts

Status of art therapy becoming a protected licensure in Michigan.

On July 5th, Bill HB6098 was introduced in the Michigan House of Representatives, by Representative Abdullah Hammoud (District 15) and supported by Michigan state representatives Robert Wittenberg, Kristy Pagan, Leslie Love, Jon Hoadley, Sherry Gay-Dagnogo, Sara Cambensy. All are Democrats but we have had some encouraging dialogue with a couple of Republicans (who currently control both the House and the Senate in Michigan).

<http://legislature.mi.gov/doc.aspx?2018-HB-6098>

The next step is that the bill needs to clear the Health Policy Committee. They will decide if this should move onward to the House for a vote. Amber James and Wendy Case already presented 'what art therapy is' to the Health Policy Committee a few months ago at a council meeting in Macomb Twp. It appeared to leave a positive impression as some legislators who attended that meeting mentioned it months later in future dialogues with MAAT board members.

On August 17th, Amber James and Amy Rostollan-Hamman met with the head of the health policy committee, Representative Vaupel. First off, the bad news is that Rep Vaupel confirmed what we heard from another rep recently, that due to the condensed schedule, the number of bills left to be finished, the November mid-term elections, and the amount of work left to do on our end, it is very unlikely that our bill will be passed this year.

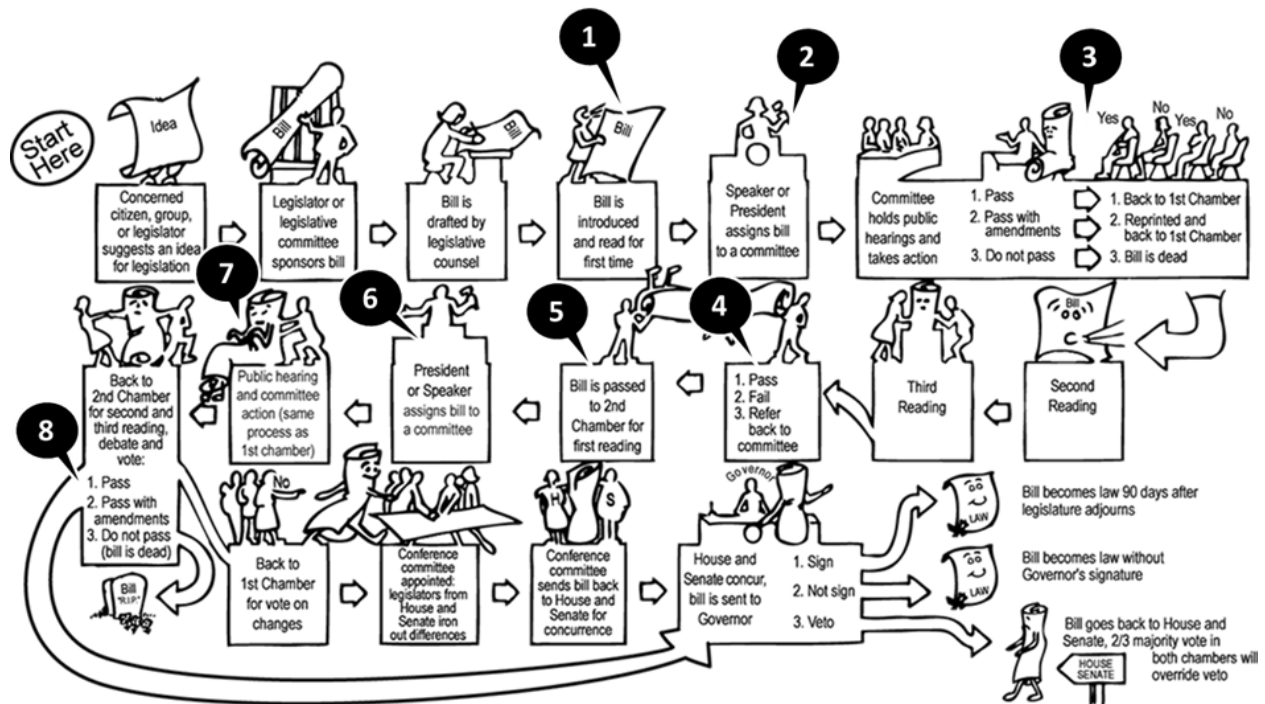
The good news is that Rep Vaupel, who is a key legislator as he sets the agenda to determine which bills are discussed in committee, is not opposed to our bill as we previously thought. He also spelled out exactly what he is looking for when he decides which bills are put on the agenda for committee discussions. He gave us a "to-do list" to work on and said if we can accomplish the tasks, our bill would be a good candidate to get put on the agenda. He said we are in good shape to reintroduce the bill next year, as soon as possible as long as we continue educating and meeting with legislators like we are doing.

The things on the list included, **1)** Contact LARA and discuss costs of licensure, they should either support licensure or have a neutral stance **2)** Get a Senate sponsor and continue educating senators and representatives **3)** Reach out to major insurance providers to ensure they would not oppose licensure as they are typically present during committee hearings and will anticipate us pursuing reimbursement next **4)** Be ready to get this bill introduced first thing in January by having the first 3 things completed.

MAAT is planning on doing a conference call soon to plan our strategy to prepare for January. The last few months of the year will go by fast. We need to develop a plan and have members commit to meeting with their reps and senators and have a few who are willing to take on the insurance companies. There are 110 representatives and 38 senators so there is a lot of work yet to do. Once we present the bill again in January, it will then go through the committee and voted on. Hopefully it will pass and then it will move on, with the sponsorship from a yet unknown representative from the Senate.

If it passes in the Senate, the bill will be made law. On the heels of that milestone, the Michigan Association of Art Therapy will be attempting new legislation for third-party billing but we need licensure protection and our own regulatory board before that can take place.

Thank you everyone! We will be setting up this conference call in the near future (so keep an eye out for further information. We really do need all hands on deck to keep this going and continue the momentum!



- Find your state senator: <http://www.senate.michigan.gov/fysbyaddress.html>
- Find your state house rep: <http://www.house.mi.gov/mhrpublic/frmFindaRep.aspx>