

The State of Music Therapy

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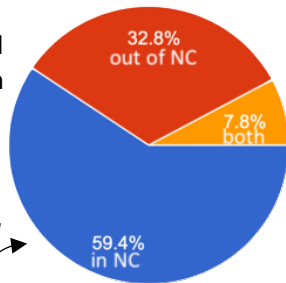
North Carolina

There are more than 200 music therapists in North Carolina.

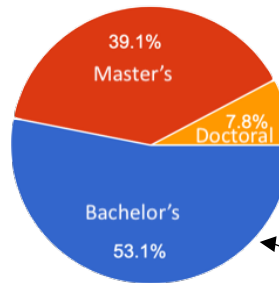
How are they trained?

Music therapists must complete Bachelor's-level training at minimum from an approved music therapy program.

The majority of NC music therapists were educated here.



Music therapy training includes 1200 clinical hours, including 900 hours in a full-time internship.



Qualified practitioners earn the national certification Music Therapist-Board Certified (MT-BC).

Many NC music therapists hold advanced degrees.

How Music Therapy Benefits Institutions

<p>\$2,984</p> <p>- cost savings per patient over a 9-month period for a home hospice agency thanks to music therapy (associated with less need for staff assistance and less medication)</p>	<p>\$76.15</p> <p>- cost savings per patient per procedure in a pediatric hospital thanks to music therapy procedural support (including drastically less need for sedation)</p>	<p>\$0.00</p> <p>- cost to North Carolina taxpayers for music therapists to establish and maintain state licensure</p>
<p><i>Select Public Agencies Currently Receiving Music Therapy Services:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caldwell Co. Schools • Cherry Hospital • Durham Parks and Rec Dept • Durham VAMC • Gaston Co. Schools • J. Iverson Riddle Dev. Ctr. • NC DHHS • Pitt Co. Schools • Wake Co. Schools 		

How Music Therapy Benefits

In 2019, music therapists served more than 15,000 North Carolinians in a variety of settings. The most frequently served populations are individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder, people with Alzheimer's or other dementia, people with developmental disabilities, individuals in mental health and psychiatric settings, and older adults.

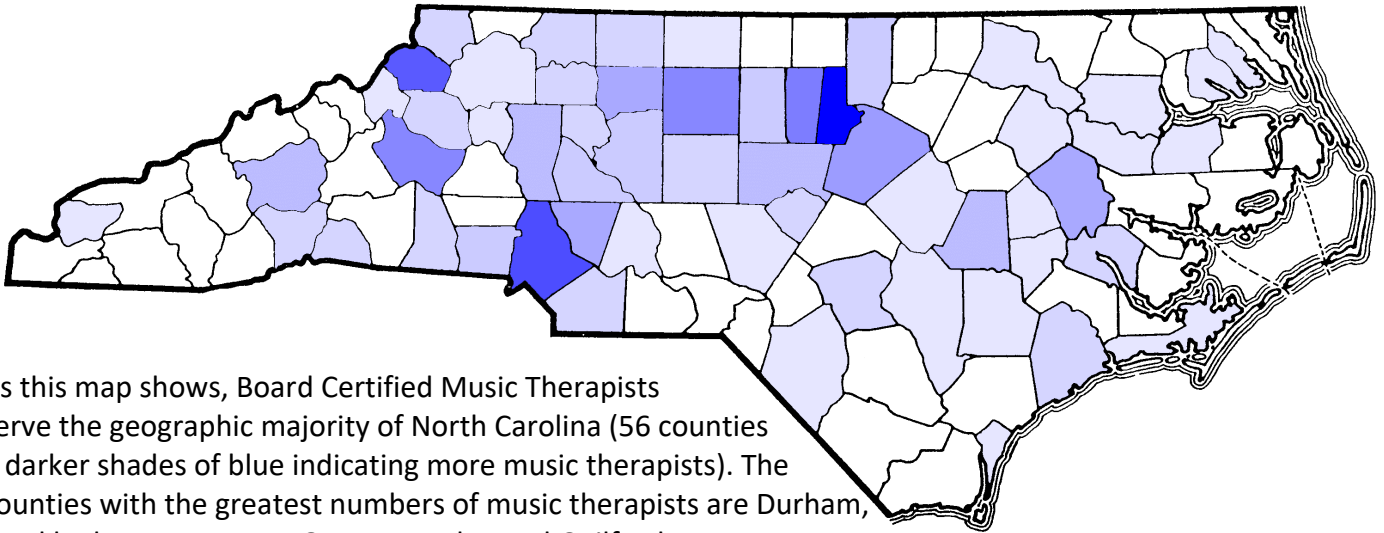
To find out more, contact Martine Bullard or Cheryl Stephenson, co-chairs of the NC Chapter of Music Therapy State Recognition:
NCMusicTherapyTaskForce@gmail.com

Why regulate music therapy on a state level?

- many potential employers expect professional therapists to hold state-level licensure; a lack of such a credential for music therapists represents a barrier to services for many agencies, including hospitals, nursing homes, and other care agencies.

- lack of state title protection means unqualified individuals may misrepresent themselves as music therapists. Without training, these people may unintentionally harm the people they work with (such as overstimulating a person with dementia).

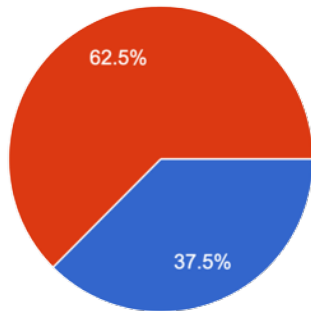
- a majority of NC music therapists know examples of misrepresentation or harm by untrained musicians, and a majority report being denied insurance claims. Some report having offers rescinded or positions dissolved due to lack of state licensure.



As this map shows, Board Certified Music Therapists serve the geographic majority of North Carolina (56 counties – darker shades of blue indicating more music therapists). The counties with the greatest numbers of music therapists are Durham, Mecklenburg, Watauga, Orange, Burke, and Guilford.

-- Access to underserved and rural parts of the state would benefit from state licensure --

More than 1/3 (37.5%) of music therapists in NC have considered leaving the state due to lack of job opportunities related to lack of licensure



Why do we need trained music therapists? Can't volunteer musicians do the same things?

The difference can best be illustrated with an example from a music therapist: "An 18 year old young man was in a coma for many days after traumatic car wreck and the team was beginning to discuss end of care options with the family. This young man personally loved listening to "head banging rhythms, grunge sounds and destructive lyric style" music, according to his mother. However, his mother was working at home to ban this music. Mom was able to convince the treatment team to play her preferred music at his bedside.

During this time, his vitals were not stable, and he often crashed. Finally, one of the team MD's saw the music therapist elsewhere in the hospital, supervising MT university students. He mentioned this case and asked for a friendly consult. The MD & MT went to the patient's room and after casual conversation occurred, they asked the mom to take a coffee break. While she was out, they changed the music to the patient's preferred music. Within minutes, his oxygen stats and BP were rising to a healthier level and more. As the mom returned, the RN met her and explained how her son had just made a turn for the better. She was escorted in the room for the DR & MT to discuss what had occurred. It was just a few more days before this patient was coming out of his coma. He has made a full recovery."

Quotes from music therapists re: lack of state recognition:

- "If not for the need to stay close to my family, I would have moved to a state with licensure/ Medicaid waiver."

- "Lack of licensure prevents music therapists from applying to certain jobs; it also allows for less-qualified individuals to take jobs that would be better suited for credentialed music therapists."

- "The decision to move back to NC after leaving for internship was motivated only by personal reasons. If professional opportunities had been the highest priority, I would not have come back."

- "I feel that there is not quite the same level of respect for MT within the state of NC and therefore less opportunities for jobs and increased wages."

