

March 5, 2025

The Honorable Douglas Collins  
Secretary of Veterans Affairs  
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
810 Vermont Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Secretary Collins:

As national representatives for Recreation Therapists and Creative Arts Therapists, we urge your office to place [Recreational Therapy and Creative Arts Therapy](#) on the exempt list from potential layoffs within the Department of Veterans Affairs. These specialized therapists play a critical role in improving the well-being of our nation's veterans, contributing not only to their mental and physical health, but also to their recovery and reintegration into civilian life.

Recreational therapy and creative arts therapies, which include music therapy, art therapy, dance/movement therapy, drama therapy, biblio/poetry therapy, and psychodrama, offer invaluable services that are essential to the rehabilitation and healing process for many veterans. These treatment interventions promote emotional expression, reduce stress, and offer outlets for veterans dealing with trauma, mental health challenges, and the difficulties of readjustment after service. There is significant research to support these benefits to veterans (an [abbreviated list is linked here](#)). Many veterans directly benefit from these services, often experiencing tangible improvements in mood, self-esteem, physical functioning, and overall quality of life.

In addition to the therapeutic benefits, the presence of these specialized professionals in VA facilities fosters an environment of integrative care utilizing non-pharmacological interventions, supporting veterans in their physical, emotional, and psychological recovery. With the strain on healthcare services in the U.S., it is critical that recreational and creative arts therapists continue to be part of the VA workforce to ensure veterans are receiving the holistic and comprehensive care they deserve. These therapy services contribute to successful reintegration into communities following service.

We respectfully ask that you consider the significant impact that recreational therapy and creative arts therapists have on the health and well-being of veterans and place these therapists on the exempt list to prevent further disruption to the services they provide. Their work is essential to the ongoing care and support of our veterans.

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and for your continued commitment to supporting the men and women who have served our country. We look forward to your favorable response.

Sincerely,

Board of Directors  
American Dance Therapy Association