



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Samra G. Brouk

## Senator Samra Brouk Announces Passage of Historic Bills in the NY Senate to Address the Mental Health Workforce Shortage

SAMRA G. BROUK June 16, 2025



**June 16, 2025 (ALBANY, NY):** Senator Samra G. Brouk (SD-55) and colleagues in the New York Senate passed two historic bills that expand New Yorkers' access to Licensed Creative Arts Therapy (LCAT) services and address the mental health workforce shortage. Senate bill [S1001](#) requires more insurance policies to cover outpatient care provided by LCATs while [S6025](#) authorizes LCATs to bill Medicaid directly for their services.

New York State is home to over 2,000 LCATs, representing 14% of the state's licensed mental health practitioners, but they have been ineligible for Medicaid reimbursement, leaving insured New Yorkers without access to lifechanging therapeutic services. This means vulnerable community members, especially individuals with non-traditional therapeutic needs, have limited options. Senator Brouk's legislation will close the gap between need and access for more residents while supporting the mental health workforce.

LCATs hold master's degrees in psychotherapy and use the arts to reach a wide range of patients, including individuals who are non-verbal, children, aging adults, people with intellectual disabilities, patients recovering from stroke or traumatic brain injury, non-native English speakers, individuals with acute trauma, and members of underserved communities such as refugees and immigrants. They provide culturally competent services for individuals who do not find talk therapies effective or consider them stigmatizing. Psychotherapy services include dance/movement therapy, drama therapy, art therapy, and other forms of creative expressions.

**Senator Samra Brouk (SD-55):** "Traditional therapy is not a one-size-fits-all treatment. Licensed Creative Arts Therapists are uniquely qualified to help individuals who may be left in the margins of our mental health care system. At a moment in history when the federal government is stripping services and support away from vulnerable populations, I'm proud to continue our efforts here in New York to expand access to psychotherapy services like dance/movement therapy, drama therapy, art therapy, and other forms of creative expressions."

**Emily Genovese, Program Director of Art Therapy in Creative Arts Therapy at Nazareth**

**University:** "As both an educator of future art therapists and a practicing clinician, I strongly supported Bill S1001/S6025. When New York State established the Office of the Professions, licensed creative arts therapists (LCATs) were formally recognized as qualified mental health

professionals. This legislation restores that original intent by ensuring LCATs are included in commercial insurance coverage, just like other licensed providers. Expanding reimbursement will not only increase access to care for individuals and families—it will also affirm the professional viability of this path for the graduate students I teach, who are preparing to serve their communities with creativity, compassion, and clinical excellence.”

**Monica Lopez Gamboa, LCAT, 1199 SEIU delegate:** “As an 1199 delegate, I am immensely grateful for Senator Brouk's hard work in passing S1001 and S6025. As a clinician working in inpatient psychiatry in the Bronx, my patients often struggle to access affordable mental healthcare in the community and these bills will help tremendously with improving access & reducing repeated inpatient hospitalizations.”

**Maya Benattar, LCAT, Founder and Chair of the LCAT Advocacy Coalition, and UUP member/SUNY New Paltz faculty:** "As the founder of the LCAT Advocacy Coalition I am deeply grateful for Senator Brouk's hard work in passing S1001 and S6025. Licensed Creative Arts Therapists have been providing psychotherapy to New Yorkers for almost 20 years & improving access will greatly help ease the current mental health crisis, while providing accessible and culturally attuned therapy options for all New Yorkers."