

NLGA – For Consideration:

**NLGA Consensus Resolution in Support of the Arts and Creative Arts Therapies
to Advance Health and Well-Being**

WHEREAS, the health and well-being of individuals and communities are essential to strong and thriving states and a healthy nation, and research demonstrates that the arts and creative arts therapies can contribute to healthier lives across the lifespan; and

WHEREAS, a landmark 2019 World Health Organization review encompassing more than 3,000 studies identified important roles for the arts in preventing illness, promoting health and well-being, and supporting the management and treatment of physical and mental health conditions [1]; and

WHEREAS, mental health challenges affect communities across every state and territory, particularly young people, with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's 2025 Youth Risk Behavior Survey finding that approximately one-in-three U.S. high school students experienced persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness [2]; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Surgeon General's 2023 advisory, *Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation*, identified loneliness and social isolation as significant public health challenges—highlighting the importance of social connection to physical and mental health and community well-being [3]; and

WHEREAS, participation in the arts can reduce stress, improve emotional well-being, strengthen social connection, and enhance quality of life, while professional creative arts therapies—including art therapy, music therapy, dance/movement therapy, drama therapy, and other established disciplines—provide specialized approaches that complement clinical treatment and support patients, caregivers, and healthcare professionals [1, 4]; and

WHEREAS, research from the National Endowment for the Arts found that adults who attended live arts events were less likely to report frequent loneliness and more likely to receive needed social and emotional support, which highlights the arts' contributions to community health and well-being [5]; and

WHEREAS, a 2023 national survey by Americans for the Arts found that 60% of U.S. adults agree the arts have helped them cope during times of mental or emotional distress, and 81% support government funding of arts and culture to address mental health issues [6]; and

WHEREAS, arts-based social prescribing connects individuals with community arts and cultural activities through healthcare referrals to support health and well-being, and a 2025 national study found that 76% of U.S. adults would be likely to follow a physician's recommendation to participate in the arts to improve their physical or mental health [7]; and

WHEREAS, emerging economic research suggests that some arts-in-health programs and creative arts interventions may offer cost-effective approaches to improving health and well-being, including potential savings through reduced healthcare utilization [1]; and

WHEREAS, arts-in-health initiatives are taking place in hospitals, schools, senior centers, veterans' facilities, and community settings, and partnerships among arts organizations, healthcare providers, educational institutions, and public agencies can expand access to evidence-informed approaches that promote health and strengthen communities;

39 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the National Lieutenant Governors Association (NLGA)
40 recognizes the value of arts participation, arts-in-health programs, and professional creative arts
41 therapies to advance physical and mental health, social connection, and overall well-being.

42 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that NLGA encourages state and territorial leaders to explore
43 opportunities for arts and health initiatives through cross-sector partnerships, arts-based social
44 prescribing, expanded community arts engagement, and the evaluation of health outcomes and cost-
45 effectiveness.

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47 ADOPTED, this day, the ___ of December, 2026.

48 Co-Sponsors: *TBD following approval.*

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50 *Proposed for the docket by:* Americans for the Arts, NLGA Partner

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52 References

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- 59 3. Office of the U.S. Surgeon General. (2023). *Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation: The U.S.*
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