



**Hearts of Practice:
Promoting Statewide Strategies in the Arts and Health**

February 12 – 13, 2026

The Dupont Circle Hotel, Washington, D.C.

Hearts of Practice is the culminating event in a series of year-long activities by an Arts and Health Professional Learning Community (PLC). The PLC aims to build knowledge and strengthen practices of state and jurisdictional arts agencies and regional arts organizations working at the nexus of the arts and health sectors. The event and PLC are initiatives of NASAA in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts.

Speaker Bios and Session Materials:



AGENDA

Wednesday, February 11: Arrivals and Registration

Afternoon/Evening Check-in and registration at the hotel

Thursday, February 12: Promoting Statewide Strategies in the Arts and Health

8:00 – 9:00 a.m. Breakfast and registration
The Doyle

9:00 – 10:00 a.m.

Welcome and Call to Action

The Dupont Ballroom

Greetings and Statement of Purpose

- Pam Breaux, President and CEO, National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA)
- Mary Anne Carter, Chairman, National Endowment for the Arts (NEA)

Keynote Speech and Q&A

- David Skorton, CEO, Association of American Medical Colleges

Welcome to D.C. and Artist Demonstration

- Aaron Myers, Executive Director, DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities
- Anthony Hyatt, Artist in Residence, Lombardi Comprehensive Cancer Center, Georgetown University

10:00 – 11:30 a.m.

Plenary Session One

The Dupont Ballroom

The Arts on Prescription: Bringing Strategies to Scale

Speakers: Adrienne Hundley, Head of Community Strategy, Art Pharmacy; Emily Devlin, LCSW, Head of Strategic Partnerships & Clinical Innovation, Art Pharmacy; Erik Holmgren, Manager of Advancement and Strategic Partnerships, Mass Cultural Council; Andrea Macone, Director, Office of Community Health, Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Bureau of Substance Addiction Services

Facilitator: Aly Maier Lokuta, Assistant Vice President, Arts & Well-Being, New Jersey Performing Arts Center

Proponents of arts prescribing maintain that the practice can improve public health at minimal cost. Arts funders and arts

organizations are critical partners in this growing model of care delivery. This session explores the idea of building a larger cohort of states participating in arts-on-prescription models. What are the health and economic benefits and, if such programs are feasible and effective, what would it take to expand them nationwide, state by state? What kinds of relationships, if any, should state arts agencies build with physicians and clinics, Medicaid carriers, and health insurance companies? What would be required from a capacity perspective, and how can more state arts agencies and their communities be engaged?

11:30 a.m. – 12:45 p.m. Lunch and networking
The Doyle

12:35 – 12:45 p.m. Optional movement break
The Dupont Ballroom

12:45 – 2:00 p.m. Breakout Sessions

Option A

Foxhall

Healing for Our Veterans and Military: Targeted Arts and Health Strategies

Speakers: Bill O’Brien, Senior Advisor for Innovation and Director of Creative Forces, NEA; Christine Bial, Director of Arts & Humanities Grant Programs, Mid-America Arts Alliance; Bryan Bales, Program Manager, Wellness, Arts and the Military, ArtsWA

Facilitator: CAPT (ret) Moira McGuire, Cofounder, The National Initiative for Arts and Health across the Military

Creative arts therapies and other arts and health interventions can help improve health and quality of life for military and veteran populations and their families. This session reviews lessons learned about serving military-connected populations through programs managed by state arts agencies and

through NEA Creative Forces Community Engagement Grants. How have participants found success in communicating the value of their programs, and what opportunities lie ahead for other organizations and communities to partake of such work?

Option B

The Dupont Ballroom

Sustaining Investments in Healthy Aging through the Arts

Speakers: Kim Johnson, Director of Arts & Health, Tennessee Arts Commission; Troy Hickman, Education Program Manager, Vermont Arts Council; Anne Basting, Founder and Board President, TimeSlips, and Lead Advisor, Memory Café Alliance; Meghan McFerrin, Arts Education Project Manager, NASAA

Facilitator: Samatha Clarke, Program Officer – Arts Education & Lifelong Learning, Multidisciplinary Service, New Jersey State Council on the Arts

Many studies suggest that integrating the arts with routine activities and programming for older adults can yield positive health outcomes. This session considers how state programs support lifelong learning through the arts, but also arts interventions that address aging related conditions such as dementia and other cognitive and neurological disorders. In particular, the session examines the role of public-private partnerships for creative aging.

2:15 – 3:30 p.m.

Plenary Session Two

The Dupont Ballroom

Tracking the Impact of the Arts and Health: Research and Evaluation

Speakers: Dr. Tasha Golden, Author, Researcher and Singer-Songwriter; Eric Ashby, Director of Programs, Indiana Arts

Commission; Jeff Niblack, Director, Research and Evaluation, Minnesota State Arts Board

Facilitator: Sunil Iyengar, Director, Office of Research & Analysis, NEA

To support the effective promotion of statewide strategies in the arts and health, research and evaluation are essential. This session discusses measuring and communicating the value and impact of arts and health strategies, including through program evaluation. What are key capacity constraints and how might they be resolved? How can state arts agencies and regional arts organizations begin to develop metrics to monitor progress with their arts and health strategies, and what kinds of partnerships should be created to promote research and data sharing?

Dr. Tasha Golden's new e-book, [The Co-Creation Effect](#), is available at a discount for Hearts of Practice attendees, along with a free [custom resource about evaluation](#).

3:30 – 3:45 p.m.

Refreshment break and visual arts engagement

3:45 – 5:00 p.m.

Plenary Session Three

The Dupont Ballroom

Bridge Building in the Arts and Health: Connecting the Sectors

Speakers: Anisa Raoof, Arts and Health Program Director, Rhode Island State Council on the Arts; Kate Van Steenhuyse, Assistant Director, Kansas Arts Commission; Katie Clark Wheeler, Administration for Community Living, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Facilitator: Steven Boudreau, Director of Equity and Engagement, Rhode Island Office of Healthy Aging

Cross-sector collaboration is vital to the longevity of arts and health programming. Several states have sustained successful long-term partnerships with departments of health and other relevant state organizations. This session explores how such alliances are fostered and nourished. What can we learn from each other, what is the most effective use of federal support in this conversation, and are there statewide or national networks that can be organized for mutual benefit?

Evening

Dinner on your own

Friday, February 13: Community, Closing and Tours

8:00 – 9:00 a.m.

Breakfast
The Doyle

9:00 – 11:15 a.m.

Plenary Session Four
The Dupont Ballroom

Artist Demonstration

- Life Pieces to Masterpieces

Fireside Chat

- Julia Langley, Director, Arts & Humanities Program, Georgetown Lombardi Comprehensive Cancer Center, in conversation with CAPT (ret) Moira McGuire, Cofounder, The National Initiative for Arts and Health across the Military

Next Steps: An Interactive Dialogue

- The Tenacious Rose Project and Ryan Stubbs, Chief Program and Strategy Officer, NASAA

11:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. **City Tours: Exploring the Arts & Health in Washington, D.C.**

- Smith Center for Healing and the Arts
- DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities