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NEWS RELEASE

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## AUGUSTA SYMPHONY TO OFFER MUSIC THERAPY AT KNOX MUSIC INSTITUTE

**Augusta, GA** – In an effort to further its mission to share the joy of music with its community beyond the walls of the concert hall, the Augusta Symphony will offer Music Therapy as part of its Community Chords education and outreach programs. The Symphony has hired Veronica Andreassen-Barker, a licensed and board-certified music therapist, to run the program, which will be free of charge to its beneficiaries. In its inaugural year, Community Chords Music Therapy participants will be groups of adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities or traumatic brain injuries.

Symphony Executive Director Anne Catherine Murray stated, “Music therapy is proven to be a powerful and healing element for people with a variety of needs, but it is rarely covered by health insurance. We wanted to make this service free for people who might not otherwise have access.” The Symphony staff developed the structure for the program, which will serve around sixty adults in its first year, and searched for funding to hire a therapist and purchase musical instruments. In July, University Health Care System President and CEO Jim Davis approached Murray to learn more about the program, which will reside in the Knox Music Institute adjacent to the Miller Theater. Davis noted, “University is proud of its longstanding relationship with the Symphony, working together to provide entertainment and services for the betterment of our community. When we learned of the Music Therapy Program and its potential to directly impact the health of our residents, we were first in line to support it.”



As a three-year Presenting Sponsor of Community Chords Music Therapy, University Health Care System is funding the expertise of Ms. Andreassen-Barker, MT-BC in her provision of music therapy to adults coming from a number of area facilities who will transport them to the Knox Music Institute. A native of Aiken, Andreassen-Barker studied at Furman University (Greenville, SC) and Lesley University (Cambridge, MA). She has practiced since 2003 both in the US and abroad, including with the Department of Veterans Affairs in Durham, NC. “I am so thankful that the Augusta Symphony and University Health Care System not only recognize music therapy as an integral part of holistic healing for so many with physical, mental, and developmental needs but also advocate for increasing access to music therapy services in the CSRA. I can’t wait to get started,” said Andreassen-Barker. While she has identified partner organizations for the first year of music therapy services, she hopes to grow the number of beneficiaries each year.

For more information on Community Chords Music Therapy, visit [augustasympphony.com/music-therapy](http://augustasympphony.com/music-therapy).

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*Our mission is to share the joy of great musical performance with our audience.  
Together, we are music.*

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