

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2859

As Reported by House Committee On:
Health Care & Wellness

Title: An act relating to the regulation of massage therapy.

Brief Description: Establishing new requirements for licensing massage therapists.

Sponsors: Representatives Williams, Hinkle, Moeller and Green.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Health Care & Wellness: 1/31/08, 2/4/08 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Modifies the requirements related to a massage practitioner's license, including specifying a continuing education requirement for license renewal and authorizing an inactive credential.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE & WELLNESS

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 13 members: Representatives Cody, Chair; Morrell, Vice Chair; Hinkle, Ranking Minority Member; Alexander, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Barlow, Campbell, Condotta, DeBolt, Green, Moeller, Pedersen, Schual-Berke and Seaquist.

Staff: Chris Cordes (786-7103).

Background:

A license is required from the Department of Health (DOH) to practice massage therapy. The practice of massage therapy means a health care service involving the external manipulation or pressure of soft tissues for therapeutic purposes. The practice is regulated under rules adopted by the Washington State Board of Massage (Board) and approved by the Secretary of the DOH.

An applicant for a license must successfully complete a course of study in an approved program, successfully complete an examination, and be 18 years of age or older.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Under Board rules, a massage therapist must complete 16 hours of continuing education every two years.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

Continuing Education Requirement

Renewal of a massage practitioner's license requires, in addition to other requirements, completion of continuing education requirements, as established and administered by the Board.

Inactive Credential

The Secretary of the DOH must grant an inactive credential to a massage practitioner if the practitioner submits a letter to the Board stating the intent to obtain an inactive credential and the practitioner holds an active license in good standing and does not practice massage in Washington.

An inactive credential may be reinstated if the massage practitioner meets the Board's reinstatement requirements, pays the renewal fee, and provides a written declaration that (1) no action has been taken by a state or federal jurisdiction or a hospital that would restrict the practitioner's practice, (2) he or she has not voluntarily given up a credential to avoid sanctions, and (3) he or she has satisfied continuing education and competency requirements for the most recent two years.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill: (1) makes explicit reference to the Board's authority to administer continuing education requirements and applies those requirements to license renewal instead of license application; and (2) delays the bill's effective date to July 1, 2009.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect July 1, 2009.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The massage therapy industry has been supporting these changes for some years.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Melanie Stewart, Washington Chapter of the American Massage Therapy Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.