

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2781

As Passed House:
February 17, 2016

Title: An act relating to the board of massage.

Brief Description: Requiring the Washington state board of massage to adopt rules to allow approved massage programs to establish transfer programs.

Sponsors: Representatives Harris, Cody, Senn and Moeller.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Health Care & Wellness: 1/29/16, 2/3/16 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/17/16, 98-0.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Washington State Board of Massage to adopt rules to allow Board-approved massage programs to establish transfer programs that accept an individual's credits or clock hours from schools that have not been approved by the Board.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE & WELLNESS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 15 members: Representatives Cody, Chair; Riccelli, Vice Chair; Schmick, Ranking Minority Member; Harris, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Caldier, Clibborn, DeBolt, Jinkins, Johnson, Moeller, Robinson, Rodne, Short, Tharinger and Van De Wege.

Staff: Ariele Landstrom (786-7190).

Background:

Massage therapy is a health care service involving the external manipulation or pressure of soft tissue for therapeutic purposes.

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.

The practice of massage is regulated by the Washington State Board of Massage (Board). The Board regulates the practice of massage therapy and, with respect to training and education, is authorized to:

- define, evaluate, approve, and designate those massage schools, massage programs, and massage apprenticeship programs, including all current and proposed curriculum and faculty standards from which graduation will be accepted as proof of an applicant's eligibility to take the massage licensing examination;
- review approved massage schools and programs periodically; and
- establish by rule the standards and procedures for approving courses of study in massage therapy.

The minimum educational requirements for licensure to practice massage therapy in Washington is successful completion of a course of study from a massage school, program, or apprenticeship program approved by the Board. Application for approval of a school or program must be made by an authorized representative of the school or the administrator of an apprenticeship agreement.

Summary of Bill:

The Board is required to adopt rules to allow Board-approved massage programs to establish transfer programs that accept an individual's credits or clock hours from schools that have not been approved by the Board, in order to recognize prior education that is applicable to licensure as a massage therapist or massage practitioner.

Prior education includes credits or clock hours from schools, colleges, and universities that are:

- accredited by a national or regional accreditation organization;
- approved by a state authority with responsibility for oversight of vocational programs; or
- approved by a state agency that regulates massage programs and is a member of the Federation of State Massage Therapy Boards.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) There is strong support for this bill. It is vital to ensure Washington is in alignment with the nation regarding transfer students and practitioners and considers their prior education. The profession needs more therapists and this bill provides an additional tool to expand the pool of therapists.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Harris, prime sponsor; Gail McGaffick and Diana Thompson, American Massage Therapy Association; and Mark Allen, Washington Massage Envy Cooperative.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.