

## MASSAGE THERAPIST LICENSING

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<http://www.house.mi.gov/hfa>

**House Bill 5001 (returned from the Senate as S-2)**

**Sponsor: Rep. Dan Lauwers**

**House Committee: Regulatory Reform**

**Senate Committee: Health Policy**

**Complete to 12-12-16**

Analysis available at  
<http://www.legislature.mi.gov>

**BRIEF SUMMARY:** House Bill 5001 would increase educational requirements for licensure as a massage therapist. The bill would take effect 90 days after it is enacted into law.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** House Bill 5001 (H-1) would have no fiscal impact on the Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA).

### ***THE CONTENT OF THE BILL:***

The bill would amend Section 17959 of the Public Health Code (MCL 333.17959) to specify that an individual enrolled in a massage education program on or after August 1, 2017, would need to complete at least 625 hours of classroom instruction as part of the program; until then the current 500-hour requirement would remain in place.

The same hours requirements would apply to an individual who completed an acceptable "substantially equivalent program" outside of Michigan. The bill also would strike a current requirement that to be licensed as a massage therapist, an individual must have a high school diploma as well as language relating to a path to licensure that is no longer available.

To become licensed, a person would need to have successfully completed one of the following, and provided an academic transcript that is satisfactory to the Michigan Board of Massage Therapy as evidence of successful completion:

- A massage education program that meets all of the following:
  - Includes at least 500 hours of classroom instruction to complete the program if the applicant is or was enrolled in the school before August 1, 2017, or at least 625 hours of classroom instruction if the applicant enrolls in the school on or after August 1, 2017.
  - Uses only classroom instruction provided at a physical location where the students and an instructor are present to provide program components that contain psychomotor domain learning, including palpation, hands-on techniques, and clinical or lab experiences, or to provide other program components that the board determines require classroom instruction at a physical location where the students and an instructor are present.
  - All classroom instruction in the program is facilitated by a qualified instructor who is trained in the subject matter being taught, and, if the classroom instruction is provided by distance education, is trained in distance education teaching methods.

- Complete at least 500 hours of course and clinical massage education, if enrolled prior to August 1, 2017, would need to in a substantially equivalent program in another state, country, jurisdiction, territory, or providence that, on a case-by-case basis, is found by the board to be sufficient. If enrolled on or after that date, complete 625 hours. This is already contained in the law. The bill would increase the threshold to 625 hours if enrolled on or after August 1, 2017.

The following terms would also be added by the bill:

"Classroom instruction" would mean educational instruction that is either provided at a physical location where the students and an instructor are present or provided by distance education.

"Distance education" would mean instruction that meets all of the following:

- Is provided electronically or online.
- Does not require that the students and the instructor are physically present at the same place.
- Allows for regular interaction between the students and instructor through a learning management system, online discussion board, live chat, or virtual classroom.
- Provides a method for unique sign-in for student identification, provides for timely communication between instructors and students, and allows students to monitor their grades and progress.

## ***DISCUSSION AND BACKGROUND:***

According to testimony presented in committee, the number of hours required for licensure as a massage therapist in Michigan are among the lowest of the states that license massage therapists. To remedy this, the bill raises the number of hours that an individual must complete in a program in order to meet the licensing requirements. Presently in Michigan, an individual must either complete a supervised curriculum in a school massage education program that has at least 500 hours of classroom instruction OR complete at least 500 hours of course and clinical massage education in a substantially equivalent program in another state, county, jurisdiction, territory, or providence that, on a case-by-case basis, is found by the Michigan board of massage therapy to be sufficient. Under the bill, an individual enrolled in a massage education program on or after August 1, 2017, would need to complete at least 625 hours of classroom instruction

## ***POSITIONS:***

The Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs supported the H-1 substitute (12-9-15)

The American Massage Therapy Association supported the bill as introduced (12-2-15)

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■ This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan House Fiscal Agency staff for use by House members in their deliberations, and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.