

- SUBJECT:** Requirements for a massage therapist license
- COMMITTEE:** Public Health — favorable, without amendment
- VOTE:** 6 ayes — Delisi, Cohen, Coleman, Gonzales, S. King, Olivo
0 nays
3 absent — Laubenberg, Jackson, Truitt
- WITNESSES:** For — Raul S. Flores, Texas Association of Massage School Owners; Jerry Valdez, Career Colleges & Schools of Texas; (*Registered, but did not testify*: Patte Kent, Texas Chiropractic Association; Gary Tyner, Jr., Career Colleges & Schools of Texas; Lyle Wilson, Parker College School of Massage Therapy; Johnna Cain Holland; Kerri Leigh Mills; Jordan M. Milne; Elizabeth Niblett; Tina Stephens)

Against — None

On — Heather Muehr, Department of State Health Services; (*Registered, but did not testify*: Susan Matheny)
- BACKGROUND:** The Department of State Health Services (DSHS) governs a massage therapy program that registers and regulates massage therapists, instructors, schools, and establishments in accordance with the Massage Therapy Registration Act.

In 2005, the 79th Legislature, enacted HB 2696 by Anchia, et al., which changed the system for authorizing the practice of massage therapy in Texas from one of registration to one of licensure under the DSHS and the executive commissioner of the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC). The bill also amended the requirements for licensed massage therapists.

Currently, Texas requires that a licensed massage therapist complete 300 hours of education to receive a license as a licensed massage therapist. National certifying bodies currently require a minimum of 500 hours of course work for certification and recognition. Furthermore, massage therapist licenses issued by DSHS rarely are recognized outside of Texas

because most other states and the District of Columbia require a minimum of 500 hours of coursework.

DIGEST:

HB 2644 would amend Occupations Code, sec. 455.156(b) to increase the requirements for a massage therapist license. The minimum amount of supervised course instruction delivered by a licensed massage therapy instructor would increase from 300 hours to 500 hours. At least 200 hours would have to be devoted to the study of massage therapy techniques and theory, the practice of soft tissue massage, with at 125 of these hours dedicated to Swedish massage therapy techniques.

The bill would add or increase coursework requirements for other aspects of massage therapy licensure as follows:

- 50 hours for the study of kinesiology;
- 40 hours for the study of pathology;
- 20 hours for the study of hydrotherapy, up from 15 hours;
- 20 hours for the study of first aid, universal precautions, and cardiopulmonary resuscitation, in addition to existing requirements for health and hygiene training; and
- 45 hours for the study of massage therapy laws and rules, business practices, and professional ethics, up from 15 hours for business practices and professional ethics alone.

The bill would remove the practical portion of the state examination, leaving only the written portion.

The bill would take effect January 1, 2008, and would apply to a license applicant who first enrolled in a massage therapist training program on or after that date.