

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
80R8337 BEF-D

H.B. 2644
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Health & Human Services
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Engrossed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Current requirements for massage therapy instruction in Texas are a 300-hour mandated curriculum. Texas graduates are prohibited from qualifying for national certification under the present 300-hour state mandated curriculum. A minimum of 500 hours is required for national recognition by the National Certificate Examination for Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork Program, accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies. Currently, Texas graduates have no licensing reciprocity when moving to other states and the District of Columbia. All other states that regulate the curriculum and practice of massage therapy instruction require a minimum of 500 hours, with many states exceeding that number with programs that include up to 1,000 hours of training to be licensed or recognized.

A student in Texas currently has extremely limited access to federal funding because of the reduced number of required hours. The shorter mandated 300-hour curriculum provides only limited federal tuition assistance and forces students to pay on a strictly cash basis, or resort to risky high-interest loan programs. From the perspective of massage therapy employers, a curriculum of at least 500 hours is routinely requested by employers hiring entry-level graduates. Market demands for well-trained registered massage therapists formerly included many in the chiropractic and medical health-related fields, but now competes with spas, high-end hotels, and various resort destinations.

H.B. 2644 seeks to raise the education standard for massage therapy instruction in the State of Texas. The bill increases the total number of hours required, at a minimum, and requires that massage therapists completing the new curriculum be licensed by the State of Texas, and partake in additional course work not previously required, such as infection control, CPR training, and business ethics.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 455.156(b), Occupations Code, to require an applicant for a massage therapist license under this section to be an individual and present evidence satisfactory to the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) that the person has satisfactorily completed massage therapy studies in a 500-hour minimum, rather than 300-hour, supervised course of instruction provided by a massage therapy instructor at a massage school, a licensed massage school, a state-approved educational institution, or any combination of instructors or schools, in which at least a certain increased amount of hours are dedicated to certain studies, including the studies of kinesiology, pathology, massage therapy laws and rules, first aid, universal precautions, and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). Deletes existing text relating requiring an applicant for a license to have practiced the profession for a certain amount of time. Makes conforming changes.

SECTION 2. Makes application of this Act as it applies to Section 455.156, Occupations Code, except as provided by Section 3 of this Act, prospective.

SECTION 3. Makes application of this Act as it applies to the deletion of former Section 455.156(b)(1)(B), Occupations Code, prospective.

SECTION 4. Effective date: January 1, 2008.