



Business League for Massage Therapy & Bodywork (BLMTB)

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Legislative Update: March 18, 2009

Massage Therapy Bill

The AMTA's massage therapy licensure bill is beginning to move through the process.

Things will move very quickly - as they've waited till the last minute to push the bill through. This means there may NOT be time to really analyze it or to even give much notice for public hearings.

We have, however, seen an unofficial draft dated March 11.

Unless the bill has changed substantially since then, we **MUST OPPOSE** the bill as it appeared at that time for the following reasons:

1. Schools will be put out of business: all schools must be nationally accredited. We know of only 1 in the state and there are at least 5 schools that are not.
2. There is **NO** grandfathering/grand mothering. Practitioners currently in business would have 3 years to go to a 500 hour school and take the test. That's a transitional license and not grandfathering. This is a hardship on practitioners who have been practicing safely. This is the worst provision that we've seen in a massage therapy licensing bill ever.
3. Practitioners could lose their license if they do not report another practitioner's violation of the law.
4. Manual therapy is excluded. In Montana law, this is a term that means "physical therapy." Therefore, anything that we do that overlaps with the scope of physical therapy is not allowed if it is specifically not listed as part of our scope. This is a big concern.
5. Exercise is excluded from the scope, but there is no definition for "exercise." Does exercise mean movement? We cannot support this terminology.

The process reminds us of 2003, when the official bill was only unveiled at the last minute. This does not give time for a thoughtful process and excludes practitioners from the process.

Once we see the official draft, we will develop amendments that need to be included to remove our opposition. Until then, please do the following:

WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW:

1. Call Helena 444-4800
2. Leave a message for Rep. Elsie Arntzen, the sponsor of the bill

The message:

The massage therapy licensing bill puts Montanans out of work - you said you would not sponsor a bill that does that.

I do not support LC859.

Rep. Arntzen has told people she has not heard any opposition to the bill. Well, when no one can see the official bill, there is nothing to comment on, so of course there is no opposition. Let her know how you feel about the provisions above.

SB 287 Update

The hearing is Friday, March 20 at 8:30 am in Room 172

Please call 444-4800 and leave a message in support of SB287

Leave the message for the House Business and Labor Committee.

Given what we've seen so far, it looks like the massage therapy bill will not pass once again - we just can't support a bill that puts people out of work. But, SB287 will provide a stop-gap until our profession can get it together. We've long said that we support meaningful licensure, but until it is enacted, a health freedom bill will protect us and all other alternative and complementary healthcare providers, while providing new consumer protection.

Please support SB287.

If you like what we do and want to financially support our efforts, consider becoming a member.

For only \$10 per year you can get an email-only membership, which entitles you to behind-the-scenes info not available to the public.

Thanks for your help!!

Deborah Kimmet, Patty Murphy & Vianna Myles