



## DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H., Secretary

**Maryland Board of Massage Therapy Examiners**  
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### 2024 SESSION POSITION PAPER

**BILL NO:** HB 1497  
**COMMITTEE:** HGO  
**POSITION:** Support

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**TITLE:** State Board of Massage Therapy Examiners – Scope of Practice, Reinstatements, and Examinations by Health Care Providers

**BILL ANALYSIS:** The bill when enacted will authorize massage professionals to use handheld tools to perform massage therapy; require applicants for reinstatement of a license or registration to submit to a criminal history background check; and provide for the ability of the Board to require applicants or licensees to submit to an evaluation by a healthcare provider should the Board deem this necessary to protect the public from a potentially harmful massage provider.

**POSITION AND RATIONALE:** The Maryland Board of Massage Therapy Examiners (the “Board”) supports HB 1497.

#### **Practice Massage Therapy**

The purpose of the bill is to clearly define the practice of massage therapy both for the public consumer and massage professional. This clarity includes the fact that hand-held tools are permissible in the delivery of massage therapy. As with other professions, cutting edge technology plays an integral role in the delivery of safe and efficient healthcare services. The use of these hand-held tools, with proper training, will not only improve the quality and efficiency of the care provided, but it will also extend the work life of the massage professional by reducing injuries to the provider's joints, hands, arms, shoulders, and back.

#### **Criminal History Background Check**

On October 1, 2016, the Criminal History Background Check requirement as one condition for licensure went into effect. Approximately three thousand individuals, who were licensed or registered by the Board prior to the enactment of the law, have never been fingerprinted. Requiring criminal history records check with a reinstatement application ensures proper vetting of applicants and the ability to implement criminal history updates through “RAP back” for each applicant.

**Evaluation**

From time to time the Board may have reason to believe that an applicant or licensee may cause harm or pose a threat to individuals who seek massage therapy services. In those instances, the Board deems it prudent to obtain an independent evaluation by the appropriate healthcare provider to determine fitness to practice. The primary focus of the Board is the protection of the public. The Board will pay the cost of the evaluation, with no economic impact on the applicant or licensee.

For all of these reasons, the Board of Massage Therapy Examiners respectfully requests a favorable vote on HB 1498.

For more information, please contact Sharon J. Oliver, Executive Director at 410-764-5985 or [Sharon.oliver@maryland.gov](mailto:Sharon.oliver@maryland.gov); or Lillian Reese, the legislative liaison for the health occupations boards at 443-794-4757 or at [lillian.reese@maryland.gov](mailto:lillian.reese@maryland.gov).

*The opinion of the Board expressed in this document does not necessarily reflect that of the Department of Health or the Administration.*