

Chapter 192

(House Bill 42)

AN ACT concerning

Health Occupations – State Board of Massage Therapy Examiners – Revisions

FOR the purpose of authorizing an individual registered by the State Board of Massage Therapy Examiners to practice massage therapy in the State to continue to practice massage therapy beyond a certain date; altering the requirements an individual must meet to qualify for a license to practice massage therapy; repealing obsolete qualifications for registered massage practitioners; repealing the requirement that the imposition of a certain administrative penalty be subject to certain hearing requirements; altering certain reinstatement and reactivation requirements; and generally relating to massage therapists.

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
 Article – Health Occupations
 Section 6–301(a), 6–302, 6–305(d), 6–306, and 6–306.2
 Annotated Code of Maryland
 (2021 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article – Health Occupations

6–301.

(a) Except as otherwise provided in this title, before an individual may practice massage therapy in the State, the individual shall be:

(1) [On or before October 31, 2026:

(i) Licensed by the Board; or

[(ii) (2) Registered by the Board to practice massage therapy in a setting that is not a health care setting]; or

(2) On or after November 1, 2026, licensed by the Board].

6–302.

(a) In this section, “contact hour” means 50 minutes of actual instructional time per each 60–minute hour.

(b) To qualify for a license, an applicant shall be an individual who:

(1) Is of good moral character;

(2) Is at least 18 years old;

(3) **[Has] EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN SUBSECTION (C) OF THIS SECTION, HAS** graduated from an institution of postsecondary education, as defined in § 10–101 of the Education Article and approved by the Maryland Higher Education Commission, with at least 750 contact hours of education in a curriculum:

(i) Approved by the Board;

(ii) Endorsed by:

1. The Commission on Massage Therapy Accreditation; or

2. An equivalent entity that accredits both institutions of higher education and programs offering instruction in massage therapy; and

(iii) Accredited by an institutional accreditation agency recognized by **[the]:**

1. **THE** United States Department of Education; **OR**

2. **ANOTHER ENTITY THAT ACCREDITS PROGRAMS OFFERING INSTRUCTION IN MASSAGE THERAPY;**

(4) **[Has] EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN SUBSECTION (C) OF THIS SECTION, HAS** completed 750 contact hours of education in a Board–approved program for the study of massage therapy that includes the following areas of content:

(i) Anatomy, physiology, and kinesiology;

(ii) Massage therapy theory;

(iii) Contraindications and pathology;

(iv) Professional ethics;

(v) Health and hygiene;

(vi) Research;

- (vii) Supervised hands-on techniques; and
- (viii) Clinical assessment and documentation;
- (5) Has passed an examination approved by the Board; and
- (6) Submits to a criminal history records check in accordance with § 6-303 of this subtitle.

[(c) On or before September 30, 2024, to qualify to be registered, an applicant shall be an individual who:

- (1) Is of good moral character;
- (2) Is at least 18 years old;
- (3) Has graduated from a program for the study of massage therapy with a curriculum:
 - (i) Approved by the Board;
 - (ii) Endorsed by:
 - 1. The Commission on Massage Therapy Accreditation; or
 - 2. An equivalent entity that is an accrediting agency or organization that accredits both institutions of higher education and programs offering instruction in massage therapy;
 - (iii) Accredited by an institutional accreditation agency recognized by the United States Department of Education; and
 - (iv) That requires at least 600 contact hours of classroom instruction that includes the following areas of content:
 - 1. Anatomy, physiology, and kinesiology;
 - 2. Massage therapy theory;
 - 3. Contraindications and pathology;
 - 4. Professional ethics;
 - 5. Health and hygiene;
 - 6. Research;

- 7. Supervised hands-on techniques; and
 - 8. Clinical assessment and documentation;
- (4) Has passed an examination approved by the Board; and
- (5) Submits to a criminal history records check in accordance with § 6-303 of this subtitle.]

(C) (1) AN APPLICANT WHO HAS GRADUATED FROM AN OUT-OF-STATE PROGRAM FOR THE STUDY OF MASSAGE THERAPY SHALL HAVE GRADUATED FROM A PROGRAM FOR THE STUDY OF MASSAGE THERAPY THAT:

(I) HAS BEEN APPROVED BY THE STATE’S HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION OR SIMILAR ENTITY THAT REGULATES INSTITUTIONS OF POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION;

(II) HAS BEEN ENDORSED BY:

1. THE COMMISSION ON MASSAGE THERAPY ACCREDITATION; OR

2. AN EQUIVALENT ENTITY THAT IS AN ACCREDITING AGENCY OR ORGANIZATION THAT ACCREDITS BOTH INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND PROGRAMS OFFERING INSTRUCTION IN MASSAGE THERAPY;

(III) IS ACCREDITED BY AN INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION AGENCY RECOGNIZED BY:

1. THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION; OR

2. ANOTHER ENTITY THAT ACCREDITS PROGRAMS OFFERING INSTRUCTION IN MASSAGE THERAPY; AND

(IV) SUBJECT TO PARAGRAPH (2) OF THIS SUBSECTION, REQUIRES AT LEAST 750 CONTACT HOURS THAT INCLUDES THE AREAS OF CONTENT REQUIRED UNDER SUBSECTION (B)(4) OF THIS SECTION.

(2) AN APPLICANT WHO HAS GRADUATED FROM AN OUT-OF-STATE PROGRAM FOR THE STUDY OF MASSAGE THERAPY THAT DOES NOT MEET THE

CONTACT HOUR REQUIREMENT UNDER THIS SUBSECTION MAY SUPPLEMENT THE REQUIRED HOURS WITH:

(I) CONTACT HOURS FROM A BOARD-APPROVED PROGRAM OF STUDY OF MASSAGE THERAPY, ON A 1-HOUR TO 1-HOUR BASIS;

(II) BOARD-APPROVED CONTINUING EDUCATION HOURS, ON A 1-HOUR TO 1-HOUR BASIS; OR

(III) DOCUMENTED EVIDENCE OF HAVING COMPLETED AT LEAST 1,000 LICENSED, OUT-OF-STATE HOURS OF HANDS-ON MASSAGE THERAPY EXPERIENCE WITHIN THE IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING 2 YEARS.

(d) (1) Subject to paragraph (2) of this subsection, the Board may waive any requirement of this subtitle for an applicant who is licensed, certified, or registered to practice massage therapy in another state.

(2) The Board may grant a waiver under paragraph (1) of this subsection only if the applicant:

(i) Pays the application fee set by the Board; and

(ii) Provides adequate evidence that the applicant:

1. Has completed educational requirements that the Board determines to be equivalent to the Board-approved educational requirements in this State;

2. At the time the applicant became licensed, certified, or registered in the other state, passed in that state or any other state an examination that the Board determines to be equivalent to the examination required in this State; and

3. Is of good moral character.

(e) On or after October 1, 2024, the Board may not issue an initial registration to practice as a registered massage practitioner.

(f) [On or before October 31, 2026, the] **THE** Board shall convert the registration of an individual registered by the Board as a registered massage practitioner to a license to practice massage therapy if the individual complies with regulations adopted by the Board.

6-305.

(d) (1) Each licensed massage therapist or registered massage practitioner shall notify the Board in writing of any change in the name or address of the licensed

massage therapist or registered massage practitioner within 60 days after the change occurred.

(2) [Subject to the hearing provisions of § 6–309 of this subtitle, if] **IF** a licensed massage therapist or registered massage practitioner fails to notify the Board within the time required under this subsection, the Board may impose an administrative penalty of \$100.

6–306.

(a) If a licensed massage therapist or registered massage practitioner fails for any reason to renew a license or registration, the Board shall reinstate the license or registration if the former licensed massage therapist or former registered massage practitioner:

(1) Applies to the Board for reinstatement of the license or registration within 5 years after the license or registration expires;

(2) Meets the renewal requirements of § 6–305 of this subtitle;

(3) Submits to the Board satisfactory evidence of having completed a State and national criminal history records check in accordance with § 6–303 of this subtitle; and

(4) Pays to the Board the reinstatement fee set by the Board.

(b) (1) **[The] EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH (2) OR (3) OF THIS SUBSECTION, THE** Board may not reinstate the license of a former licensed massage therapist or registration of a former registered massage practitioner who fails to apply for reinstatement of the license or registration within 5 years after the license or registration expires.

(2) [If the Board does not reinstate a license or registration under paragraph (1) of this subsection, a] **A** former licensed massage therapist [or former registered massage practitioner] may apply for a new license [or registration] by meeting the licensing [or registration] requirements in effect at the time of application for obtaining a new license [or registration] under this title and any additional requirements determined by the Board.

(3) A FORMER REGISTERED MASSAGE PRACTITIONER WHO FAILS TO APPLY FOR REINSTATEMENT OF THE REGISTRATION WITHIN 5 YEARS AFTER THE REGISTRATION EXPIRES MAY BE REINSTATED ONLY BY MEETING THE LICENSING REQUIREMENTS IN EFFECT FOR OBTAINING A NEW LICENSE UNDER THIS TITLE AND ANY ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS DETERMINED BY THE BOARD.

6–306.2.

(a) The Board shall place a licensed massage therapist or registered massage practitioner on inactive status if the licensee or registration holder submits to the Board:

(1) An application for inactive status on the form required by the Board;
and

(2) The inactive status fee set by the Board.

(b) A licensed massage therapist or a registered massage practitioner on inactive status may reactivate the license or registration if the licensee or registration holder:

(1) Complies with the continuing education and CPR requirements that are:

(i) Established in regulations adopted by the Board; and

(ii) In effect for the current license or registration renewal period in which the licensee or registration holder seeks to reactivate the license or registration;
[and]

(2) SUBMITS TO THE BOARD SATISFACTORY EVIDENCE OF HAVING COMPLETED A STATE AND NATIONAL CRIMINAL HISTORY RECORDS CHECK IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 6-303 OF THIS SUBTITLE; AND

[(2)] (3) Pays the reactivation fee set by the Board.

(c) A REGISTERED MASSAGE PRACTITIONER ON INACTIVE STATUS WHO FAILS TO REACTIVATE A REGISTRATION WITHIN 5 YEARS OF FIRST BEING PLACED ON INACTIVE STATUS MAY REACTIVATE THE REGISTRATION ONLY BY MEETING THE LICENSING REQUIREMENTS IN EFFECT FOR OBTAINING A NEW LICENSE UNDER THIS TITLE AND ANY ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS DETERMINED BY THE BOARD.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July 1, 2026.

Approved by the Governor, April 28, 2026.