



Board of Massage Therapy Examiners

Larry Hogan, Governor · Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor · Dennis R. Schrader, Secretary

Caitlin Thompson, Chair – Sharon J. Oliver, Executive Director

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2022 SESSION POSITION PAPER

BILL NO: SB 37

COMMITTEE: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

POSITION: Support

TITLE: Health Occupations – State Board of Massage Therapy Examiners – Requiring License to Practice and Other Revisions

BILL ANALYSIS: This bill will eliminate the registered massage therapy practitioner designation from the statute and create a “single tier” of licensed massage therapists. The revisions include changes to the educational and hours requirements for licensure in massage therapy. In addition, requirements for out-of-state applicants will be added to the statute. This change will improve the practice of massage therapy by standardizing the requirements for licensure as well as ensuring the safety of Maryland citizens.

POSITION AND RATIONALE: The Board of Massage Therapy Examiners (the “Board”) supports SB 37. A single professional tier is the national and industry standard for massage therapy. In order to align ourselves with this standard, converting from a dual tiered system to a single tier system is necessary. A two-tiered system is confusing in nature to the public as well as professionals, and by transitioning to a single tier system, we will increase public safety and awareness. A single tier clarifies the professional standard and scope of practice of massage therapy and increases job opportunities that were previously unavailable to registered massage practitioners.

In 2020, the Board surveyed all of its current licensees and registrants and found that the majority support the changes addressed in this bill. Further, the American Massage Therapy Association, both at the state and national levels, supports and has worked closely with the Board in the drafting of this bill.

SB 37 raises the educational hour requirement for licensure, while maintaining a high standard of care and safety for the public. Additionally, this bill removes the college credit requirement, which will allow for greater and more equitable access to professionals entering the field, as well as more portability amongst out-of-state applicants, including spouses of military personnel.

Page 2
SB 37 - BMTE

Thank you for considering this testimony. The Board of Massage Therapy Examiners is respectfully requesting a favorable report on SB 37. For more information, please contact Caitlin Thompson, Board Chair, 410-370-2789, caitlin.thompson@maryland.gov In addition, the Board's Executive Director, Ms. Sharon Oliver, may be reached at 410-764-5985, sharon.oliver@maryland.gov.

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