



Maryland Chapter of the American Massage Therapy Association
vp1.amta.maryland@gmail.com 410-570-8927

January 27, 2022

Delegate Shane E. Pendergrass
Delegate Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk
Health and Government Operations Committee
House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

HB0220

Dear Delegates,

The American Massage Therapy Association is the nation's largest not for profit, member driven massage trade organization. I am representing the Maryland Chapter; I am a licensed massage therapist LMT and board member with the chapter.

Integrating high standards for entry level massage education into a fair and balanced licensing system is achieved by this bill and we are asking for your support of Single Tier Licensure - HB 220.

Raising the education requirement to 750 hours provides a vigorous and complete entry level education that will create qualified, ethical professionals. This is how we protect the public.

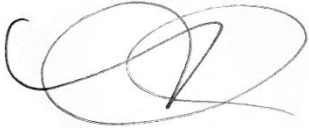
Additional reasons for this change.

- Employment disparity and confusion: RMPs are limited in the settings they can work, even though many have more experience and training than an LMT. There is also evidence that this has depressed income opportunities for RMPs as well.
- License Portability: Maryland's college requirements have made license portability difficult and confusing. Simply another barrier for the out of state therapists and military spouses seeking to become a Maryland massage therapist.
- Building Strength for the Industry: We have recently seen a reduction in the work force (15-20%) with open job opportunities at almost all massage businesses and nobody to fill them. Between increasing portability and making the path to becoming an LMT smoother, we hope that this will also help the industry recover over the next few years.
- A point of equity, RMPs are not allowed to sit on the Board of Massage Therapy Examiners barring over 1500 individuals from eligibility. The Board is strengthened by a diverse group of members and perspectives.
- Current RMPs will be converted to LMT status over the next few years. The details will be in the Regulations, and have been provided by the Board. AMTA-MD finds the process and requirements fair, importantly, no RMP will be required to return to school or incur extra expenses to become an LMT in this process. We urge the Board to make the proposed regulations public so that registrants can know what to expect in this process.

AMTA Maryland, with the support of a majority of its membership, is pleased to voice our approval of this bill and ask for your vote in favor.

It is time to remove obstacles to licensure and create a fair and equitable system that allows the needed and valuable massage industry to thrive in Maryland.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke at the end, likely representing the name Amelia Mitchell.

Amelia Mitchell, LMT LLCC
Board Member and Government Relations Committee Chair
Maryland Chapter of the American Massage Therapy Association