



# Montgomery County

## Office of Intergovernmental Relations

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**HB 220**

**DATE: February 1, 2022**

**SPONSOR: Delegate Kelly**

**ASSIGNED TO: Health and Government Operations**

**CONTACT PERSON: Leslie Frey (leslie.frey@montgomerycountymd.gov)**

**POSITION: SUPPORT (Department of Health and Human Services)**

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

House Bill 220 would require an individual to be licensed by the State Board of Massage Therapy Examiners in order to practice massage therapy the beginning November 1, 2026. The bill would require the state board to maintain an electronic record of all individuals licensed or registered by the Board and make the roster available for the purpose of verifying licensure or registration on the Board's website. House Bill 220 would also subject an individual who practices massage therapy without a license or registration to a civil fine of up to \$50,000, among other provisions.

Human trafficking is an issue across Maryland, including in Montgomery County. The Montgomery County Department of Human Services (DHHS) works to mitigate its harmful effects and would welcome additional tools to regulate unlicensed businesses and empower the State Board to issue fines for unlicensed businesses.

In 2015, Montgomery County enacted Bill 9-15 requiring businesses to be licensed to perform the practice of acupressure and reflexology if employees or contractors are not registered or licensed massage therapists. As state law preempts counties from enacting local laws for massage, HB 220 will further assist the County in reducing human trafficking by strengthening the power of the Board to issue civil penalties to individuals who perform massage therapy without a license, require those who practice massage therapy to be licensed, and to require individuals to be accredited with national standards. Additionally, a roster of licensed massage therapists could be utilized by DHHS and county law enforcement to verify that businesses operating in the County are properly licensed.

Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services respectfully urges the committee to issue a favorable report on House Bill 220.