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Health and Government Operations  
Committee  
Subcommittees

Health Occupations and Long-Term Care

Public Health and  
Minority Health Disparities

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
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**HB242 Massage Therapy – Definition and Reimbursement**

Madame Chair, Madame Vice Chair, and members of the Health and Government Operations Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you about House Bill 242.

Massage therapy is a common practice in medical fields related to physical therapy treatment as well as pain management, and is often recommended alongside physical therapy for recovery. Recently, efforts have been made to recognize massage therapy as a legitimate practice under the law: in 2016, a State Board of Massage Therapists was established to train, educate, and regulate massage therapists, creating a greater platform for practicing massage therapists across the State.<sup>1</sup> Despite this, massage therapy is often treated as a second-class method of care under the law – most egregiously, massage therapy is not covered under many insurance plans, and is not considered practical treatment under current statute. House Bill 242 addresses this issue by altering the definition of massage therapy to more accurately describe its intent, and by removing a provision preventing massage therapy from being covered by insurance.

House Bill 242 stipulates that massage therapy may be considered treatment of illness, disease, or injury. This is necessary in order to reflect the purpose of massage therapy as a method of treating injury, often alongside physical therapy. More impactfully, House Bill 242 repeals a piece of statute that did not require a health insurance provider to reimburse a licensed massage therapist for their services provided in pursuit of treatment. This action brings insurance practices for massage therapy in line with other licensed practices in statute, and increases access to massage therapy services for Marylanders who need that treatment to recover from injury or pain by allowing them to pay for those services through insurance.

I respectfully request a favorable report on House Bill 242.

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<https://health.maryland.gov/massage/Pages/about.aspx#:~:text=About%20the%20Board%20%2D%20Past%2C%20Present%20and%20Future&text=The%20Massage%20Therapy%20Practice%20Act,and%20subsequently%20revised%20in%201999>