



Montgomery County

Office of Intergovernmental Relations

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HB 374

DATE: February 11, 2026

SPONSOR: Delegate White Holland

ASSIGNED TO: Health

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POSITION: FAVORABLE (Department of Health and Human Services)

State Acupuncture Board - Revisions

House Bil 374 requires the State Acupuncture Board, on renewal of a license, to make available proof of renewal to each licensee rather than issuing a renewal certificate. The bill prohibits a person from employing an individual to practice acupuncture without a license or aiding or abetting the unauthorized practice of acupuncture. A violator is subject to fines and/or imprisonment, as well as a civil fine of up to \$10,000. The bill also defines "manual therapies," and clarifies the definition of "practice acupuncture".

Montgomery County is the only county in Maryland that requires a business to be licensed if performing the act of acupressure and reflexology if all employees performing the act are not state licensed Massage Therapists. Montgomery County's reasoning for licensing these businesses is to prevent human trafficking. House Bill 374 will enhance Montgomery County's efforts to eradicate human trafficking by establishing the requirement that employees performing acupuncture are licensed. Prior to enacting a local law, a number of businesses in the County were fronts for human trafficking while advertising as performing reflexology, acupressure, or other similar practices that did not fit the State definition of massage. House Bill 374 will permit legitimate establishments that practice bodywork to continue while preventing illegal human trafficking operations from operating in the State under the pretext of practicing bodywork. Without the bill, traffickers can evade licensing requirements by labeling themselves as "reflexologists" or "acupressurists", practices that fall outside the state definition of "massage" for licensing purposes.

Requiring a state license for individuals performing these services will strengthen Montgomery County's enforcement efforts and help prevent licensed businesses from later engaging in illicit activities, such as moving trafficked individuals within the State. Therefore, the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services supports this bill as an important measure to close gaps in current state law and respectfully urges the committee to issue a favorable report on House Bill 374.