amta
american massage therapy association®

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Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to express our support of SB 0492/ HB 0975, legislation that strengthens regulatory oversight of provocatively suggestive language in massage therapy advertisements.

We are writing on behalf of the American Massage Therapy Association (AMTA), which represents more than 108,000 members nationwide. AMTA is dedicated to advancing consistent professional licensing standards across all fifty states, promoting public education on the efficacy of massage therapy, upholding professional ethics and standards, and supports the advancement of clinical massage therapy research.

Massage therapy is an integral component of the U.S. health care system and is widely recognized as an effective, non-pharmacological approach to pain management. A substantial body of clinical research supports its efficacy, with endorsements from institutions such as the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the American College of Physicians, the American Academy of Family Medicine, and The Joint Commission. Leading healthcare organizations, including Mayo Clinic, MD Anderson Cancer Center, Duke Integrative Medicine, the Cleveland Clinic, and Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center—have integrated massage therapy into patient care for a range of medical conditions.

Maryland massage therapists are recognized as health care professionals, requiring the advancement of standards that protect both practitioners and the public. The current statute does not include provisions that protect against the misuse of the word “massage” in advertisement of prostitution or sexual services. This gap creates a loophole that enables illicit businesses to misuse the title of licensed health care providers without accountability, putting public safety at risk.

SB 0492/ HB 0975 aims to eliminate that loophole by establishing a system for violation reports and strengthening identification requirements. This bill affirms a clear distinction between legitimate massage professionals and illicit business. Requiring the inclusion of license or registration numbers on advertisements is a crucial transparency measure that reinforces public trust and supports informed consumer decision-making.

Massage therapy advertising laws have been enacted in 18 other states, including Delaware, New

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Jersey, North Carolina, Florida, and the District of Columbia. By supporting SB 0492/ HB 0975, Maryland aligns with other states committed to strengthening safeguards for massage therapy practitioners and the public.

AMTA remains committed to advancing accountability, professional standards, and public trust within the massage therapy profession. We respectfully urge your support of SB 0492/ HB 0975 to ensure Maryland massage therapists and the public maintain trust in the systems that protect the profession.

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