



Minnesota Integrative Care Advocates
Embracing all forms of the Healing Arts

We oppose HF 644, A Bill To “Voluntarily Register” Massage Therapists

The Proponents Say:

This bill is only Voluntary and it is only Registration.

COUNTER: The proponents of the bill are Alliance to LICENSE Massage Therapy (ALMT). They have been working to get statewide Licensure for at least 20 years. The bill has all the components of licensure (i.e., educational minimums, CEU requirements, insurance requirements). “If it looks like a camel and smells like a camel, it probably is a camel.”

COUNTER: Any local unit of government could, and likely will, require compliance with the provisions in order to get a business license. Now it is MANDATORY

The Proponents Say:

This bill is only for massage and bodywork

COUNTER: Bodywork is ill defined and almost any other modality that employs touch of any kind as part of the healing session could be construed to meet the description of a bodywork therapist. In order to comply with their local business license requirement to be Registered as an RMBT, they would have to pass a test for which they have not been trained.

Furthermore, this bill is in direct contradiction to MN Stat 214. There is virtually no evidence of harm—which is irreversible damage. Minor bruising or soreness doesn't qualify as harm. Statute 214 requires that harm simultaneously rises to a level of severity and frequency and must be immediate and not remote in order to qualify occupational regulation. If there were widespread harm, the cost of insuring a Massage Therapist would be very high. Right now, it is a bargain.

The Proponents Say:

This bill would resolve the "crazy quilt" of regulation by the cities that abounds forcing many practitioners to have to possess multiple licenses.

COUNTER, Local units of government can still require business licenses, this bill doesn't preempt city ordinances. Proponents have not demonstrated that this problem is impacting large numbers of practitioners. They have not stated how many it affects. And the "crazy-quilt" is largely of the proponents own making, in fact it is a strategy the national organization has used in other states to force statewide licensure statutes to be enacted. It may and likely will result in dual regulatory

burdens in many cities, such as city business license and statewide registration. A 2010 discussion with city attorneys and the League of Minnesota Cities revealed that many city attorneys don't trust the state to properly screen and enforce the laws which they initially implemented to prevent prostitution from occurring within the city limits. History in Minnesota other states shows that licensing Massage Therapists does not prevent prostitution.

The Proponents Say:

Massage Therapy incorporates Aromatherapy, homeopathy, and other body work methods which are not massage therapy.

COUNTER: This bill casts much too wide a net. The definition of Massage Therapy could include Aromatherapists, homeopaths, Wallace Method Practitioners, and many more, who would be hard pressed to pass a Body work test. They aren't trained to be massage therapists nor is that their preference. It sounds like massage therapy schools are looking for more students.

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