



## **The Virginia Chapter of the American Massage Therapy Association seeks your support for licensure of massage therapists in Virginia**

### **Information about Massage Therapy and Therapists in Virginia**

**Massage therapists are currently certified by the Board of Nursing. We are seeking a change in the Code of Virginia to license massage therapists and eliminate outdated language.**

#### **What is massage therapy?**

- Massage therapy is the scientific manipulation of the soft tissues of the body for the purpose of normalizing those tissues. It consists of manual techniques that include applying pressure, holding, and/or causing movement of or to the body.
- Massage therapy has the following therapeutic effects: Reduces heart rate and blood pressure; increases blood circulation; increases lymph flow and increases the activity level of the body's natural "killer cells;" relaxes muscles; improves the range of motion; increases serotonin and endorphins, the body's natural way to control pain; and reduces pain, anxiety, tension and depression, enhancing medical treatment.

#### **Who are massage therapists?**

1. Massage therapists are professionals educated and experienced in the treatment of soft tissues for therapeutic purposes by application of massage and bodywork techniques based on the manipulation or application of pressure to the muscular structure or soft tissues of the human body.
2. In order to be certified, massage therapists must complete 500 hours of study at an accredited school and achieve national certification from the National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork.
3. Virginia currently certifies 5,490 massage therapists under the Board of Nursing.
4. Forty-four states regulate massage therapists, 40 of which require licensure.

#### **Why is licensure the appropriate level of regulation for massage therapists?**

- Massage therapists practice autonomously and in settings where they work one-on-one with their clients.
- Massage therapy practice has the potential to harm the public from negligence, incompetence, or unethical behavior.



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- The current system of certification permits massage therapists to practice without state regulation if they do not call themselves massage therapists. A licensure law will prohibit this by requiring that anyone practicing massage therapy must be licensed by the Commonwealth.

Do you have questions:

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