

Toolkit for Advocating for our Licensure Bill

What you can do to get our licensure bill passed in the 2012 General Assembly.

This is your toolkit for advocating for passage of our licensure bill. Passage is by no means a done deal. Virginia's delegates and state senators need to hear from you about the importance of updating our regulation from certification to licensure. Here is what you'll need to do:

1. Before January 10th, contact your state senator and delegate and let them know about the licensure bill and why it's important (more information below).
2. After January 11th, read your emails daily. We will be sending out e-blasts to tell you what you need to write or when to call your legislators at the Capitol. (more below).
3. Plan to come to Richmond at least once during the General Assembly session (more below).
4. Our annual Legislative day is February 1st. Plan to come and offer chair massage for our legislators and staff. (Read more below).

1. Contact your state senator and delegate before January 10th.

This is a busy time of the year, but your legislators are ready to hear from you—before they go to Richmond. The best way to do this is to visit with them for 20 minutes or so in their offices. If you cannot do that, you may telephone their offices and ask to speak to them.

If you do not know who your legislators are, you can find out their name, district contact information, and some personal information by clicking on the link below:

<http://conview.state.va.us/whosmy.nsf/main?openform>.

When you call their office, you can say something like this:

I'd like to set up a time to meet with you about a bill that the certified massage therapists will be putting forward in the 2012 General Assembly session. If passed, this bill will license massage therapists, who are already regulated by the Virginia Board of Nursing. Our current regulations fail to capture those individuals practicing massage who call themselves something else, like massage practitioners. Since we work one on one with our clients in private settings and without any supervision, we believe that licensure by the state is the appropriate form of regulation.

I hope that you and I can find time to chat, if just for 15 minutes, so I can tell you a bit more about this bill and about how I practice in [where you practice].

I look forward to hearing back from you. My best times are ____, ____, and _____. I know you're busy and have a job as well, so I'm very willing to work around your schedule, if none of those days/hours works for you.

To refresh your memory about our bill, print out a copy "**FAQs-Facts for You**". These are for you, not your legislator.

What to say and do when you visit your legislator

When you visit, remember time is valuable, so plan to stay for 20 minutes maximum. Here is what you need to emphasize:

The most important thing is to describe your practice and to emphasize your professionalism but also to state that your work with clients is one on one, with the potential for harm to the client if you practice negligently or incompetently (use your own words). *That is the real reason that we*

need licensure—to make sure that all who practice massage in Virginia are held to standards that protect the public.

You can explain that our present system permits people to practice massage without being regulated, because they can call themselves massage practitioners or some such and if they don't use the term, massage therapist, they don't have to be regulated. And that doesn't provide the public with the recourse for complaining to the Department of Health Professions when they have been harmed. The bill will close that loophole.

Then you can talk about standardization of regulation across the U.S., similar to nursing, medicine, and so forth, with everyone being required to take the same entrance exam and have similar educational requirements. With 40 states requiring licensure and all the neighboring states to Virginia, licensure will help Virginia MTs become licensed in other states—increasing portability.

If they ask you questions you cannot answer, tell them that you do not know the answer and that you will make sure the Chapter lobbyist knows their concern. She will be able to contact them, or if you wish, you can contact the lobbyist and get back with them. Do not make something up! The Chapter lobbyist is Becky Bowers-Lanier: 804-382-0991, becky@B2Lconsulting.com or bowerslanier@gmail.com.

Print out and take the “Factsheetlegislator “with you and leave it with the legislator.

If you cannot meet with your legislator and meet instead with their aide, follow the same procedure as above. The aide will communicate your visit with the legislator.

2. What you need to do after January 11th.

You may recall from high school civics that bills must be passed in identical forms in both houses of the legislature before being signed by the Governor. So our ultimate aim is to get our bill passed in both houses. We will have two versions of our bill—one for the Senate and one for the House of Delegates. When we have bill numbers, we will let you know.

Our bills will be heard in the Senate Education and Health Committee and the House Health, Welfare, and Institutions Committee. Both bills are likely to be heard in subcommittees first before the full committee.

The bills must be passed out of committees with majority votes. That means that the committee members **MUST** support our bill. Our job is to make sure that they do so. If they have heard from your **BEFORE** the session begins, they will already be familiar with the bill. If not, we will have to make them familiar with the bill after January 11th.

Your job after January 11th is to check your email EVERY DAY. When you receive notification via email from us, your job will be to email or call your delegate and state senator about our bill.

Plan to come to Richmond at least once during the General Assembly session

There are three important times for visiting the Capitol:

1. The first three weeks of the session (January 11-February 1)

You can come any day that you are able during these first three weeks. Call Becky Bowers-Lanier: 804-382-0991, becky@B2Lconsulting.com or bowerslanier@gmail.com to let her know when you can come and she will be glad to give you an assignment. Most likely she will ask you to visit with your legislators and make sure they understand how

important our licensure bill is. Before you come, make an appointment by CALLING their Capitol number . To find the Capitol number click on this link: (<http://conview.state.va.us/whosmy.nsf/main?openform>).

2. Come when our bill is heard in subcommittee or committee.
A strong showing at both of these meetings (and there will be four in the first three weeks of the session followed by 2 or 4 after February 15). We will know about 2-5 days in advance when these days will be. If you can help, contact Becky Bowers-Lanier, 804-382-0991, becky@B2Lconsulting.com or bowerslanier@gmail.com. Students are welcome!!
3. Finally, plan to come to Legislative Day on February 1th.

Legislative day is February 1st

For six years we have been treating legislators, their staff, and lobbyists to seated massages. This year will be extra important. Our previous legislative days have laid the groundwork for this effort. Our day begins at 8:30 a.m. and extends to 11:30 a.m. on February 1st. If you can help, please contact **Beverly Adams at president@amtava.org or 434-455-2786 for details**

Follow up and questions

When you visit or speak with your legislators, email Becky Bowers-Lanier: becky@B2Lconsulting.com or bowerslanier@gmail.com and give her the feedback. She will use the information for follow-up.

If you have questions, contact Becky.

And many thanks for your advocacy on behalf of massage therapists!