



**PLEASE VOTE YES for HB 543
Licensure of massage therapists in Virginia**

**Instructions for Contacting Your Delegate in the Virginia
Legislature**

HB 543, to license massage therapists, will be heard in subcommittee on Tuesday morning at 10:00 a.m. in Richmond. We need your help RIGHT NOW to contact your delegate on Monday and ask him/her to support HB 543.

Your legislators are hearing from people who are opposed to our licensure. Please speak up and ask for support for HB 543.

On Monday, call your delegate and ask him/her to vote for HB 543. That is all you need to do. Don't know who your delegate is? Click here to find out (<http://conview.state.va.us/whosmy.nsf/main?openform>). The link will take you to the Capitol telephone number. When you call, you will talk with your delegate's secretary. All you will need to do is ask for his/her support. The secretary will ask for your name and address, so she can confirm that you are a constituent.

The whole process will take 5 minutes. Please make the call.

Questions? Contact Becky Bowers-Lanier at 804-382-0991.



PLEASE VOTE YES for HB 543 Licensure of massage 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 We are seeking a change in the Code of Virginia to license massage therapists and eliminate outdated language.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 approved 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. All of Virginia's contiguous states license massage therapists, except for Virginia.

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.

How will this bill solve the problem that exists in the current regulation of massage therapists?



PLEASE VOTE YES for HB 543

Licensure of massage therapists in Virginia

- 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.
- Licensure will also ease the ability of massage therapists to become endorsed to practice in other states as well as easing the transfer of licensure of out-of-state licensed massage therapists into Virginia.