

## **Support SF 967/ HF 973: Licensing for Massage Therapists in Minnesota**

Legislation introduced last session SF 967/ HF 973, to establish the licensure of massage therapy and Asian bodywork therapy is coming up this 2023 session. Mandatory licensure would establish a uniform scope of practice, place Minnesota on par with neighboring states, and could also reduce the administrative and financial burdens massage therapists currently face from the patchwork of regulations requiring them to comply with multiple city ordinances and regulations across the state.

Licensure for massage therapists is a critical effort for the industry. Please join us in increasing standards, implementing enhanced protections and supporting licensure for all massage therapists within Minnesota.

**SF 967/ HF 973**, which would license the 6,000 massage therapists who practice in Minnesota. The American Massage Therapy Association (AMTA) is the largest non-profit, professional association serving massage therapists, massage students and massage schools. Established in 1943 and numbering some 100,000 members, AMTA works to advance the profession through ethics and standards, the promotion of fair and consistent licensing of massage therapists in all states, and public education on massage therapy's health benefits. Forty-seven states and Washington D.C. require massage therapists to be licensed. The majority of those states regulate massage therapy as a healthcare profession

**SF 967/ HF 973** would result in a uniform scope of practice, place Minnesota on par with neighboring states and could also reduce the administrative and financial burdens massage therapists currently face from the patchwork of regulations requiring them to comply with multiple city ordinances and regulations across the state.

Licensure provides assurance to the public by setting minimal qualifications and competencies for safe entry-level practitioners. Additionally, background checks would provide another level of protection for the public by setting massage therapists apart from those who seek to corrupt the good name of massage. Passage of **SF 967/ HF 973** will have the following impacts:

- As outlined above the licensing of massage therapists will provide additional levels of public protection.
- Ensure practice act protection as Minnesota is currently one of only three states where anyone can state that he or she is a massage therapist regardless of their actual training, length of experience or competence without fear of legal repercussions.
- Allow massage therapy professionals, who so choose, to participate in health care discussions through the benefit of a legally defined scope of practice.

Licensure would also address massage therapists who have had their license revoked in another state or have a conviction relevant to the practice of massage therapy. As a result, it would

prevent massage therapists in Minnesota from moving to another area if they have lost their license in one location.

In addition to public protection, massage therapy has a growing presence within the US healthcare system. Massage therapy has been singled-out as an effective non-pharmacologic approach to pain management, as shown by a significant body of clinical research, and supported by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the American College of Physicians, The American Academy of Family Medicine and The Joint Commission. Minnesota's own Mayo Clinic has joined MD Anderson Cancer Center, Duke Integrative Medicine, the Cleveland Clinic and Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, among other institutions, in integrating massage therapy into patient care for multiple conditions. These agencies and organizations require or recommend that massage therapists be state licensed.

Massage therapy is also now being utilized by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to treat the spectrum of pain in veterans (establishing GS-5 through GS-9 positions for state licensed massage therapists), covered as an optional supplemental benefit for state licensed massage therapists through multiple Medicare Advantage plans and has been a focal point of testimony on the efficacy of massage therapy before the United States Senate. Under the current system, Minnesotans are deprived of choice as Medicare Advantage plans can only reimburse for massage therapy provided by a state licensed massage therapist.

Licensing of massage therapists is necessary to ensure public protection. Please join us in setting standards, implementing enhanced protections and supporting the licensure of massage therapy in Minnesota.

Thank you for your consideration!