

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

H.B. 2644  
By: Rose  
Public Health  
Committee Report (Unamended)

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

Current requirements for massage therapy instruction in Texas are a 300-hour mandated curriculum. Texas graduates are prohibited from qualifying for national certification under the present 300-hour state mandated curriculum. A minimum of 500-hours is required for national recognition by the National Certificate Examination for Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork Program, accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies. Currently, Texas graduates have no licensing reciprocity when moving to other states and the District of Columbia. All other states that regulate the curriculum and practice of massage therapy instruction require a minimum of 500-hours, with many states exceeding that number with programs that include up to 1000-hours of training to be licensed or recognized.

A student in Texas currently has extremely limited access to federal funding because of the reduced number of required hours. The shorter mandated 300-hour curriculum provides only limited federal tuition assistance and forces all to pay on a strictly cash basis, or resort to risky high-interest loan programs. From the perspective of massage therapy employers, a curriculum of at least 500-hours is routinely requested by employers hiring entry-level graduates. Market demands for well trained registered massage therapists formerly included many in the chiropractic and medical-health related fields, but now competes with spas, high-end hotels and various resort destinations.

HB 2644, as proposed, seeks to raise the education standard for massage therapy instruction in the State of Texas. The bill increases the total number of hours required, at a minimum, and requires that massage therapists completing the new curriculum be licensed by the state of Texas, and partake in additional course work not previously required, such as infection control, CPR training, pathology and business ethics.

### **RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

### **ANALYSIS**

HB 2644 increases the total number of required hours of coursework for a person to become a registered massage therapist from a 300-hour to a 500-hour minimum, and clarifies where an applicant can complete their studies. The bill specifies the minimum number of hours that must be taught by a licensed massage therapy instructor in certain dedicated subjects, techniques, and internships. It also provides that the applicant pass the written state examination and deletes language regarding the practical portion of the state exam.

HB 2644 deletes the provision that an applicant for a massage therapist license present evidence satisfactory to the Department of State Health Services (department) that the person has practiced massage therapy as a profession for not less than five years in another state or country that the department determines does not maintain standards and requirements of practice and licensing or registration that substantially conform to the standards and requirements of this state.

### **EFFECTIVE DATE**

January 1, 2008.

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