

# **MASSAGE THERAPY ACT AND RELATED STATUTES, 2026**

## **BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONS CODE SECTION 460**

**460.** (a) No city, county, or city and county shall prohibit a person or group of persons, authorized by one of the agencies in the Department of Consumer Affairs or an entity established pursuant to this code by a license, certificate, or other means to engage in a particular business, from engaging in that business, occupation, or profession or any portion of that business, occupation, or profession.

(b) (1) No city, county, or city and county shall prohibit a healing arts professional licensed with the state under Division 2 (commencing with Section 500) or licensed or certified by an entity established pursuant to this code from engaging in any act or performing any procedure that falls within the professionally recognized scope of practice of that licensee.

(2) This subdivision shall not be construed to prohibit the enforcement of a local ordinance in effect prior to January 1, 2010, related to any act or procedure that falls within the professionally recognized scope of practice of a healing arts professional licensed under Division 2 (commencing with Section 500).

(c) This section shall not be construed to prevent a city, county, or city and county from adopting or enforcing any local ordinance governing zoning, business licensing, or reasonable health and safety requirements for establishments or businesses of a healing arts professional licensed under Division 2 (commencing with Section 500) or licensed or certified by an entity established under this code or a person or group of persons described in subdivision (a).

(d) Nothing in this section shall prohibit any city, county, or city and county from levying a business license tax solely for revenue purposes, nor any city or county from levying a license tax solely for the purpose of covering the cost of regulation.

## **BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONS CODE SECTIONS 4600-4621**

**4600.** This chapter shall be known and may be cited as the Massage Therapy Act. Whenever a reference is made to the Massage Therapy Act by any statute, it shall be construed to refer to this chapter.

**4600.5** (a) It is the intent of the Legislature that this act enable consumers and local governments to more easily identify certified massage professionals, provide for consistent statewide certification and oversight of massage professionals, ensure that schools approved by the council that are teaching massage provide a high level of training, assist local governments and law enforcement in meeting their duty to maintain the highest standards of conduct in massage establishments by vetting and disciplining certificate holders, provide for a self-funded nonprofit oversight body to certify massage

professionals, and ensure full compliance with, and execution of, the requirements of this act.

(b) It is the intent of the Legislature that broad control over land use in regulating massage establishments be vested in local governments so that they may manage those establishments in the best interests of the individual community, and that the requirements and practice of the profession of massage therapy remain a matter of statewide concern, regulation, and oversight. Local governments should give strong consideration to establishing a registration program that grants local governments the ability to either suspend or revoke a registration of massage business for specific violations.

(c) It is the intent of the Legislature that local governments, law enforcement, nonprofit stakeholders, the massage industry, and massage professionals work together going forward to improve communication and share information to further increase the value of statewide certification, to collaborate in the implementation of this act, and to develop a model ordinance reflecting best practices in massage regulation for cities and counties to adopt that will respect local control, patient privacy, and the dignity of the profession of massage therapy.

(d) It is the intent of the Legislature in extending the council's powers and duties through the sunset review process that the council continue to serve as an entity entrusted with administering a state function in its certification of massage therapy professionals and approval of massage education programs.

(e) It is the intent of the Legislature that both state and local regulation of massage therapy reflect the recognized status of certified massage professionals as health care providers.

**4601.** As used in this chapter, the following terms shall have the following meanings:

(a) "Approved school" or "approved massage school" means a school approved by the council that meets minimum standards for training and curriculum in massage and related subjects, that meets any of the following requirements, and that has not been otherwise unapproved by the council:

(1) Is approved by the Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education.

(2) Is approved by the Department of Consumer Affairs.

(3) Is an institution accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities or the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges and that is one of the following:

(A) A public institution.

(B) An institution incorporated and lawfully operating as a nonprofit public benefit corporation pursuant to Part 2 (commencing with Section 5110) of Division 2 of Title 1 of the Corporations Code, and that is not managed by any entity for profit.

(C) A for-profit institution.

(D) An institution that does not meet all of the criteria in subparagraph (B) that is incorporated and lawfully operating as a nonprofit public benefit corporation pursuant to Part 2 (commencing with Section 5110) of Division 2 of Title 1 of the Corporations Code, that has been in continuous operation since April 15, 1997, and that is not managed by any entity for profit.

(4) Is a college or university of the state higher education system, as defined in Section 100850 of the Education Code.

(5) Is a school requiring equal or greater training than what is required pursuant to this chapter and is recognized by the corresponding agency in another state or accredited by an agency recognized by the United States Department of Education.

(b) "Certificate" means a valid certificate issued by the council pursuant to this chapter.

(c) "Compensation" means a payment, loan, advance, donation, contribution, deposit, or gift of money, or anything of value.

(d) "Council" means the California Massage Therapy Council created pursuant to this chapter, which shall be a nonprofit organization exempt from taxation under Section 501(c)(3) of Title 26 of the United States Code.

(e) "Massage" means the scientific manipulation of the soft tissues. For purposes of this chapter, the terms "massage" and "bodywork" shall have the same meaning.

(f) "Massage establishment" or "establishment" means a fixed location where massage is performed for compensation, excluding those locations where massage is only provided on an out-call basis.

(g) "Massage practitioner" means a person who is certified by the council pursuant to Section 4604.2 and who administers massage for compensation.

(h) "Massage therapist" means a person who is certified by the council under Section 4604 and who administers massage for compensation.

(i) "Sole provider" means a massage business where the owner owns 100 percent of the business, is the only person who provides massage services for compensation for that business pursuant to a valid and active certificate issued in accordance with this chapter, and has no other employees or independent contractors.

**4602.** (a) The California Massage Therapy Council, as defined in subdivision (d) of Section 4601, is hereby established and shall carry out the responsibilities and duties set forth in this chapter.

(b)(1) The council may take any reasonable actions necessary to carry out the responsibilities and duties set forth in this chapter, including, but not limited to, hiring staff, entering into contracts, and developing policies, procedures, rules, and bylaws to implement this chapter.

(2) Notwithstanding any other law, the total annual salary for any individual employed or contracted by the council shall not exceed the annual salary provided pursuant to Section 11550 of the Government Code during that fiscal year.

(c) The council may require background checks for all employees, contractors, volunteers, and board members as a condition of their employment, formation of a contractual relationship, or participation in council activities.

(d) The council shall issue a certificate to an individual applicant who satisfies the requirements of this chapter for that certificate.

(e) The council is authorized to determine whether the information provided to the council in relation to the certification of an applicant is true and correct and meets the requirements of this chapter. If the council has any reason to question whether the information provided is true or correct, or meets the requirements of this chapter, the council is authorized to make any investigation it deems necessary to establish that the

information received is accurate and satisfies any criteria established by this chapter. The applicant has the burden to prove that he or she is entitled to certification.

(f) The council shall be governed by a board of directors comprised of 13 members who shall be chosen in the following manner:

(1) One member shall be a representative of the League of California Cities, unless that entity chooses not to exercise this right to appoint.

(2) One member shall be a representative of the California Police Chiefs Association, unless that entity chooses not to exercise this right to appoint.

(3) One member shall be a representative of the California State Association of Counties, unless that entity chooses not to exercise this right to appoint.

(4) One member shall be a representative of an “anti-human trafficking” organization to be determined by the council. This organization shall appoint one member, unless the organization chooses not to exercise this right to appoint.

(5) One member shall be a member of the public appointed by the Director of the Department of Consumer Affairs, unless the director chooses not to exercise this right to appoint.

(6) One member who represents an approved massage school shall be appointed by the California Association of Private Postsecondary Schools, unless that entity chooses not to exercise this right to appoint.

(7) One member shall be appointed by the American Massage Therapy Association, California Chapter, who shall be a California-certified massage therapist or massage practitioner who is a California resident and who has been practicing massage for at least three years, unless that entity chooses not to exercise this right to appoint.

(8) One member shall be a public health official representing a city, county, city and county, or state health department, to be determined by the council. The city, county, city and county, or state health department chosen, shall appoint one member unless that entity chooses not to exercise this right to appoint.

(9) (A) Two members shall each be a certified massage therapist or a certified massage practitioner who is a California resident who has practiced massage for at least three years prior to the appointment, selected by a professional society, association, or other entity the membership of which is comprised of massage therapist professionals, and that chooses to participate in the council. To qualify, a professional society, association, or other entity shall have a dues-paying membership in California of at least 1,000 individuals, have been established since 2000, and shall have bylaws that require its members to comply with a code of ethics.

(B) If there are more than two professional societies, associations, or other entities that meet the requirements of subparagraph (A), the appointments shall rotate based on a four-year term between each of the qualifying entities. The qualifying entity shall maintain its appointment authority during the entirety of the four-year term during which it holds the appointment authority. The order in which a qualifying professional society, association, or other entity has the authority to appoint shall be determined by alphabetical order based on the full legal name of the entity as of January 1, 2014.

(10) The members appointed to the board in accordance with paragraphs (1) to (9), inclusive, shall appoint three additional members, at a duly held board meeting in accordance with the board’s bylaws. One of those appointees shall be an attorney licensed by the State Bar of California, who has been practicing law for at least three

years and who at the time of appointment represents a city, county, or a city and county in the state. One of those appointees shall represent a massage business entity that has been operating in the state for at least three years. The council shall establish in its bylaws a process for appointing an additional member, provided that the member has knowledge of the massage industry or can bring needed expertise to the operation of the council for purposes of complying with Section 4603.

(g) Any decision to change the appointing authority of any member appointed to the board pursuant to paragraphs (1) to (9), inclusive, of subdivision (f) shall not be effective unless the current member has completed their term under subdivision (h) or the appointment is vacant.

(h) (1) Board member terms shall be for four years and until the appointment and qualification of their successor or until one year from the expiration of the term for which the member was appointed, whichever occurs first. A board member who has served two terms shall not be eligible for reappointment to the board regardless of the appointing authority. Any board member who, as of January 1, 2025, has served on the board for 8 out of the preceding 10 years, regardless of the appointing authority, shall vacate their appointment no later than July 1, 2025.

(2) A board member may be removed only by their appointing authority under the conditions provided in Section 106.

(i) The board of directors shall establish fees reasonably related to the cost of providing services and carrying out its ongoing responsibilities and duties. Initial and renewal fees for certificates shall be in an amount sufficient to support the functions of the council in the administration of this chapter, but in no event shall exceed three hundred dollars (\$300). The renewal fee shall be reassessed biennially by the board.

(j) Prior to holding a meeting to vote upon a proposal to increase the certification fees, the board shall provide at least 90 days' notice of the meeting, including posting a notice on the council's Internet Web site unless at least two-thirds of the board members concur that there is an active threat to public safety and that voting at a meeting without prior notice is necessary. However, the board shall not waive the requirements of subdivision (l).

(k) If the board approves an increase in the certification fees, the council shall update all relevant areas of its Internet Web site and notify all certificate holders and affected applicants by email within 14 days of the board's action.

(l) The meetings of the council shall be subject to the rules of the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act (Article 9 (commencing with Section 11120) of Chapter 1 of Part 1 of Division 3 of Title 2 of the Government Code). The board may adopt additional policies and procedures that provide greater transparency to certificate holders and the public than required by the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act. Except as otherwise provided in this chapter, meetings of the council shall be governed by either Rosenberg's Rules of Order or Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised.

(m) (1) The council shall provide a meaningful opportunity for public participation in the adoption, amendment, or repeal of any policies, procedures, rules, or bylaws that substantially impact the rights, benefits, privileges, duties, obligations, or responsibilities of individuals or entities subject to certification or approval by the council, including, but not limited to, actions by the council to increase fees, impose additional requirements for certification or approval, or substantively modify the disciplinary processes.

(2) For purposes of this subdivision, the council shall, at a minimum, publish the complete text of any policies, procedures, rules, or bylaws proposed for adoption, amendment, or repeal along with a summary of the changes being considered for a period of at least 45 calendar days before the adoption, amendment, or repeal. The council shall accept written public comments during the 45-day period and allow further public comment during a meeting held for these purposes.

(n) The council shall assess its contact with non-English speakers. Based on this assessment, the council shall offer and make available all publicly available written and electronic materials provided to certificate holders and applicants in languages other than English that the council determines will be used by a substantial number of non-English speakers who are in contact with the council. This subdivision shall not apply to examinations, denial and disciplinary legal documents, and email communications. The council shall provide a report to the Legislature on the findings of its assessment of contact with non-English speakers on or before January 1, 2019.

(o) (1) Beginning July 1, 2027, the council shall, to the extent practicable, make the records of the council available for public inspection in a manner consistent with the California Public Records Act (Chapter 1 (commencing with Section 7920.000) of Part 1 of Division 10 of Title 1 of the Government Code), as though the council were a public agency for purposes of that act.

(2) The council may charge for the direct costs of responding to requests for records pursuant to this subdivision, including staff time reasonably required to identify, locate, and provide records.

(3) It is the intent of the Legislature in enacting this subdivision that, in addition to having all exemptions under the California Public Records Act (Chapter 1 (commencing with Section 7920.000) of Part 1 of Division 10 of Title 1 of the Government Code) apply, the council shall not disclose investigatory records or records containing sensitive information, including law enforcement activities or personally identifying information regarding applicants, certificate holders, employers of certificate holders or other employer staff, council employees and contractors, massage school owners and staff, or other members of the public, including potential victims or survivors of human trafficking, sexual assault, or other crimes.

**4603.** Protection of the public shall be the highest priority for the council in exercising its certification and disciplinary authority, and any other functions. Whenever the protection of the public is inconsistent with other interests sought to be promoted, the protection of the public shall be paramount.

**4603.1** Local governments shall impose and enforce only reasonable and necessary fees and regulations on massage businesses and massage establishments, in keeping with the requirements of existing law and being mindful of the need to protect legitimate business owners and massage professionals, particularly sole providers.

**4604.** (a) In order to obtain certification as a massage therapist, an applicant shall submit a written application and provide the council with satisfactory evidence that he or she meets all of the following requirements:

(1) The applicant is 18 years of age or older.

(2) The applicant has successfully completed the curricula in massage and related subjects totaling a minimum of 500 hours, or the credit unit equivalent, that incorporates appropriate school assessment of student knowledge and skills.

(A) Of the 500 hours, a minimum of 100 hours of instruction shall address anatomy and physiology, contraindications, health and hygiene, and business and ethics.

(B) All of the 500 hours shall be from approved schools. The council shall accept the 500 hours if, at the time all of the hours were completed, the school or schools were approved. The 500 hours may be completed at more than one approved school.

Notwithstanding any other law, pursuant to its policies and procedures for approval of schools, the council shall accept hours earned by an applicant for certification as a massage therapist if those hours were completed before July 1, 2016, and were earned from a school providing education in this state that was unapproved by the council after July 1, 2016, based solely on the fact that the National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork took denial or disciplinary action against the school. For purposes of this section, “unapproved” means that the council determined that it will not accept hours from a school toward certification.

(C) (i) Any applicant who meets all of the other requirements for certification and who received instruction required by this paragraph at an approved school that was not under formal investigation at the time at which the applicant began instruction but was subsequently placed under investigation by the council shall, as a condition of certification, have the opportunity for an interview pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 4615 or an educational hearing determined by the council, provided that their application for certification was submitted to the council no more than 90 days from the date of a final decision by the council to revoke the school’s approval. Any interview or education hearing provided pursuant to this clause shall be completed no later than 12 months from the date that the council deems the application packet complete.

(ii) The council shall issue a certificate to any applicant who successfully passes the interview or education hearing described in clause (i), provided that the school at which the applicant completed the instruction was a school approved by the council within 90 days from the date an applicant submitted their application for certification and was considered to be in good standing according to the Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education at the time the applicant passed the interview or hearing.

(3)(A) The applicant has passed a massage and bodywork competency assessment examination that meets generally recognized psychometric principles and standards and that is approved by the council. The successful completion of this examination may have been accomplished before the date the council is authorized by this chapter to begin issuing certificates. This subparagraph shall be inoperative commencing on January 1, 2019.

(B) Beginning January 1, 2026, an approved massage school shall, upon each student’s completion of curriculum at the massage school, provide notice to the student that the massage and bodywork competency assessment examination described in subparagraph (A) is not a requirement for certification pursuant to this chapter but may be required for licensure or certification as a massage therapist in any other state.

(4) The applicant has successfully passed a background investigation pursuant to Section 4606, and has not violated any of the provisions of this chapter.

(5) All fees required by the council have been paid.

(6) The council may issue a certificate to an applicant who meets the qualifications of this chapter if he or she holds a current and valid registration, certification, or license from any other state whose licensure requirements meet or exceed those defined within this chapter. If an applicant has received education at a school that is not approved by the council, the council shall have the discretion to give credit for comparable academic work completed by an applicant in a program outside of California.

(7) If an applicant has received education at a school located outside of California or a school located in a country outside of the United States that does not meet the requirements of subdivision (a) of Section 4601 to be an approved school, the council shall have the discretion to give credit for comparable academic work completed by an applicant toward certification.

(b) A certificate issued pursuant to this chapter and any identification card issued by the council shall be surrendered to the council by any certificate holder whose certificate is suspended or revoked.

**4604.1.** (a) The council shall not accept applications to issue any new certificates to practice as a certified massage practitioner on or after January 1, 2015.

(b) Certificates to practice as a certified massage practitioner for applications accepted prior to January 1, 2015, may be renewed without any additional educational requirements.

(c) A massage practitioner certificate and any identification card issued by the council, shall be surrendered to the council by any certificate holder whose certificate is suspended or revoked.

**4604.2.** (a) A person who was issued a conditional certificate to practice as a massage practitioner shall, within five years of being issued the conditional certificate by the council, complete and report to the council the completion of, at least 30 hours of additional education per year from approved schools or from continuing education providers approved by the council, until he or she has completed a total of at least 250 hours of education.

(b) A conditional certificate issued to any person pursuant to this section shall immediately be nullified, without need for further action by the council, if proof of completion of the requirements specified in subdivision (a) is not filed with the council within the time period specified in subdivision (a).

(c) Notwithstanding subdivision (a) of Section 4604.1, the council shall issue a new certificate to practice as a massage practitioner to a person that successfully completes the requirements described in subdivision (a).

**4605.** Except as otherwise provided, a certification issued pursuant to this chapter shall be subject to renewal every two years in the manner prescribed by the council. A certificate issued by the council shall expire after two years unless renewed as prescribed. The council may provide for the late renewal of a certificate.

**4606.** (a) Prior to issuing a certificate to an applicant, or designating a custodian of records, the council shall require the applicant or the custodian of records candidate to

submit fingerprint images as directed by the council and in a form consistent with the requirements of this section.

(b) The council shall submit the fingerprint images and related information to the Department of Justice for the purpose of obtaining information as to the existence and nature of a record of state and federal level convictions and of state and federal level arrests for which the Department of Justice establishes that the applicant or candidate was released on bail or on his or her own recognizance pending trial.

(c) Requests for federal level criminal offender record information received by the Department of Justice pursuant to this section shall be forwarded to the Federal Bureau of Investigation by the Department of Justice. The Department of Justice shall review the information returned from the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and shall compile and disseminate a fitness determination regarding the applicant or candidate to the council. The Department of Justice shall provide information to the council pursuant to subdivision (p) of Section 11105 of the Penal Code.

(d) The Department of Justice and the council shall charge a fee sufficient to cover the cost of processing the request for state and federal level criminal offender record information.

(e) The council shall request subsequent arrest notification service from the Department of Justice, as provided under Section 11105.2 of the Penal Code, for all applicants for certification or custodian of records candidates for whom fingerprint images and related information are submitted to conduct a search for state and federal level criminal offender record information.

(f) The council is authorized to receive arrest notifications and other background materials about applicants and certificate holders from a city, county, or city and county.

**4607.** The council may discipline an owner or operator of a massage business or establishment who is certified pursuant to this chapter or is an applicant for certification pursuant to this chapter for the conduct of all individuals providing massage for compensation on the business premises.

**4608.** In addition to the other requirements of this chapter, a certificate holder shall:

(a) Display their original certificate wherever they provide massage for compensation. A certificate holder shall have their identification card in their possession while providing massage services for compensation.

(b) Provide their full name and certificate number upon the request of a member of the public, the council, or a member of law enforcement, or a local government agency charged with regulating massage or massage establishments, at the location where they are providing massage services for compensation.

(c) Include the name under which they are certified and their certificate number in any and all advertising of massage for compensation.

(d) Notify the council within 30 days of any changes in the certificate holder's legal name, home address, or the address of any massage establishment or other location where they provide massage for compensation, excluding those locations where massage is only provided on an out-call basis. A certificate holder also shall notify the council of their primary email address, if any, and notify the council within 30 days of a change of the primary email address.

**4609.** (a) It is a violation of this chapter for an applicant or a certificate holder to commit any of the following acts, the commission of which is grounds for the council to deny an application for a certificate or to impose discipline on a certificate holder:

(1) Unprofessional conduct, including, but not limited to, any of the following:

(A) Engaging in sexually suggestive advertising related to massage services.

(B) Engaging in any form of sexual activity on the premises of a massage establishment where massage is provided for compensation, excluding a residence.

(C) Engaging in sexual activity while providing massage services for compensation.

(D) Practicing massage on a suspended certificate or practicing outside of the conditions of a restricted certificate.

(E) Providing massage of the genitals or anal region.

(F) Providing massage of female breasts without the written consent of the person receiving the massage.

(2) Procuring or attempting to procure a certificate by fraud, misrepresentation, or mistake.

(3) Failing to fully disclose all information requested on the application.

(4) Impersonating an applicant or acting as a proxy for an applicant in any examination referred to in this chapter for the issuance of a certificate.

(5) Impersonating a certificate holder, or permitting or allowing a noncertified person to use a certificate.

(6) Violating or attempting to violate, directly or indirectly, or assisting in or abetting the violation of, or conspiring to violate, any provision of this chapter or any rule or bylaw adopted by the council.

(7) Committing any fraudulent, dishonest, or corrupt act that is substantially related to the qualifications or duties of a certificate holder.

(8) Denial of licensure, revocation, suspension, restriction, citation, or any other disciplinary action against an applicant or certificate holder by another state or territory of the United States, by any other government agency, or by another California health care professional licensing board. A certified copy of the decision, order, judgment, or citation shall be conclusive evidence of these actions.

(9) (A) Being convicted of any felony, misdemeanor, infraction, or municipal code violation, or being held liable in an administrative or civil action for an act, that is substantially related to the qualifications, functions, or duties of a certificate holder. A record of the conviction or other judgment or liability shall be conclusive evidence of the crime or liability.

(B) The council may take action pursuant to this paragraph when the time for appeal has elapsed, the judgment of conviction has been affirmed on appeal, or an order granting probation is made suspending the imposition of sentence.

(C) For purposes of this paragraph, "conviction" means a judgment following a plea or verdict of guilty, a plea of nolo contendere, or a finding of guilt.

(10) Dressing while engaged in the practice of massage for compensation, or while visible to clients in a massage establishment, in a manner that is deemed by the council to constitute unprofessional attire based on the custom and practice of the profession in California.

(11) Committing any act punishable as a sexually related crime or being required to register pursuant to the Sex Offender Registration Act (Chapter 5.5 (commencing with Section 290) of Title 9 of Part 1 of the Penal Code), or being required to register as a sex offender in another state.

(12) Being determined to be a threat to public safety based on mental health reasons by a medical or mental health professional, or rendered a finding of not guilty in a criminal proceeding by reason of insanity.

(b) The council may deny an application for a certificate for the commission of any of the acts described in subdivision (a). The council may also discipline a certificate holder, in any manner permitted by this chapter, for the commission of any of those acts by a certificate holder.

(c) The council shall deny an application for a certificate, or revoke the certificate of a certificate holder, if the applicant or certificate holder is required to register pursuant to the Sex Offender Registration Act (Chapter 5.5 (commencing with Section 290) of Title 9 of Part 1 of the Penal Code), or is required to register as a sex offender in another state.

(d) Denial of an initial certificate on the grounds that the applicant has been convicted of a crime or has been subject to formal discipline as provided in this section shall be consistent with the requirements of subdivision (a) of Section 480.

**4610.** (a) An applicant for a certificate shall not be denied a certificate, and a certificate holder shall not be disciplined pursuant to this chapter except according to procedures that satisfy the requirements of this section. Denial or discipline that is not in accord with this section shall be void and without effect.

(b) The council may discipline a certificate holder by any, or a combination, of the following methods:

(1) Placing the certificate holder on probation, which may include limitations or conditions on practice.

(2) Suspending the certificate and the rights conferred by this chapter on a certificate holder for a period not to exceed one year.

(3) Suspending or staying the disciplinary order, or portions of it, with or without conditions.

(4) Revoking the certificate.

(5) Taking other action as the council deems proper, as authorized by this chapter or policies, procedures, rules, or bylaws adopted by the board.

(c) The council may issue an initial certificate on probation, with specific terms and conditions, to any applicant.

(d) Any denial or discipline shall be decided upon and imposed in good faith and in a fair and reasonable manner. Any procedure that conforms to the requirements of subdivision

(e) is fair and reasonable.

(e) A procedure is fair and reasonable and meets requirements for fair procedure if the procedures specified in subdivision (f) or (g) are followed or if all of the following apply:

(1) Denial or discipline shall be based on a preponderance of the evidence. In determining the basis for the denial or discipline and making a final decision that denial or discipline shall be imposed, the council may consider all written documents or statements as evidence, but shall weigh the reliability of those documents or statements. A final decision to deny or impose discipline may be based solely on a written statement

or declaration made under penalty of perjury and the individual providing the written statement or declaration made under penalty of perjury shall not be required to appear at an oral hearing or provide additional documents or information beyond the written statement or declaration made under penalty of perjury that was already provided.

(2) The provisions of the procedure are publicly available on the council's internet website.

(3) The council provides 15 calendar days prior notice of the denial or discipline and the reasons for the denial or discipline.

(4) The council provides an opportunity for the applicant or certificate holder, to be heard, orally or in writing, not less than five days before the effective date of the denial or discipline, by a qualified person or body authorized to decide whether the proposed denial or discipline should go into effect.

(f) (1) Notwithstanding any other law, if the council receives notice that a certificate holder has been arrested and charges have been filed by the appropriate prosecuting agency against the certificate holder alleging a violation of subdivision (b) of Section 647 of the Penal Code or any other offense described in paragraph (11) of subdivision (a) of Section 4609, the council shall immediately suspend, on an interim basis, the certificate of that certificate holder, and take all of the following additional actions:

(A) Notify the certificate holder at the address last filed with the council that the certificate has been suspended and the reason for the suspension within 10 business days.

(B) Provide notification of the suspension by email to the clerk or other designated contact of the city, county, or city and county in which the certificate holder lives or works, pursuant to the council's records, within 10 business days.

(C) Provide notification of the suspension by email or first-class mail to any establishment or employer, whether public or private, that the council has in its records as employing the certificate holder, within 10 business days.

(2) Upon notice to the council that the charges described in paragraph (1) have resulted in a conviction, the council shall permanently revoke the suspended certificate. The council shall provide notice to the certificate holder, at the address last filed with the council by a method providing delivery confirmation, within 10 business days that it has evidence of a valid record of conviction and that the certificate will be revoked unless the certificate holder provides evidence within 15 days from the date of the council's mailing of the notice that the conviction is either invalid or that the information is otherwise erroneous.

(3) Upon notice that the charges described in paragraph (1) have resulted in an acquittal or have been otherwise dismissed prior to conviction, the certificate shall be immediately reinstated and the certificate holder and any establishment or employer that received notice pursuant to this section shall be notified of the reinstatement within 10 business days.

(g) (1) Notwithstanding any other law, if the council determines that a certificate holder has committed an act punishable as a sexually related crime or a felony that is substantially related to the qualifications, functions, or duties of a certificate holder, the council may immediately suspend the certificate of that certificate holder. A determination to immediately suspend a certificate pursuant to this subdivision shall be based upon a preponderance of the evidence and the council shall also consider any available credible mitigating evidence before making a decision. Written statements by any person shall not be considered by the council when determining whether to

immediately suspend a certificate unless made under penalty of perjury. If the council suspends a certificate in accordance with this subdivision, the council shall take all of the following additional actions:

(A) Notify the certificate holder within 10 business days, at the address last filed with the council, by a method providing delivery confirmation, that the certificate has been suspended, the reason for the suspension, and that the certificate holder has the right to request a hearing pursuant to paragraph (2).

(B) Notify by email or any other means consistent with the notice requirements of this chapter, any business or employer, whether public or private, that the council has in its records as employing or contracting with the certificate holder for massage services, and the California city, county, or city and county that has jurisdiction over that establishment or employer, that the certificate has been suspended within 10 business days.

(2) A certificate holder whose certificate is suspended pursuant to this subdivision shall have the right to request, in writing, an oral hearing or consideration of a written statement to challenge the factual basis for the suspension. If the holder of the suspended certificate requests an oral hearing or consideration of a written statement on the suspension, the oral hearing or consideration of a written statement shall be held within 30 calendar days after receipt of the request. A holder whose certificate is suspended based on paragraph (1) shall be subject to revocation or other discipline in accordance with subdivision (a).

(3) If the council determines, after a hearing conducted pursuant to this subdivision, to lift the suspension, the certificate shall be immediately reinstated and the certificate holder, any establishment or employer, and the city, county, or city and county that has jurisdiction over that establishment or employer, that received notice pursuant to this section shall be notified of the reinstatement within 10 business days.

(h) Any notice required under this section may be given by any method reasonably calculated to provide actual notice. Any notice given by mail shall be given by first-class or certified mail sent to the last address of the applicant or certificate holder shown on the council's records.

(i) An applicant or certificate holder may challenge a denial or discipline decision issued pursuant to this section in a court of competent jurisdiction. Any action challenging a denial or discipline, including any claim alleging defective notice, shall be commenced within 90 days after the effective date of the denial or discipline. Certification issued pursuant to this chapter is not a fundamental vested right and judicial review of denial and disciplinary decisions made by the council shall be conducted using the substantial evidence standard of review. If the action is successful, the court may order any relief, including reinstatement, that it finds equitable under the circumstances.

(j) (1) An applicant or certificate holder may request an appeal of a final decision by the council to deny a certificate or discipline a certificate holder by submitting a request in writing within 30 days of the date of the final decision. A request to appeal a final decision submitted pursuant to this paragraph shall be considered by a committee of the board of directors, who may convene in closed session for that purpose, within 120 days of the final decision.

(2) If a request to appeal submitted pursuant to paragraph (1) is granted, the appeal of the final decision to deny a certificate or discipline a certificate holder shall be heard at the next board of directors meeting with a date, as posted on the internet website of the

council, that is at least 120 days from the date that the request to appeal was granted, unless a timely request for a continuance of the hearing date is granted. The council may, in its discretion, for good cause, continue the date an appeal may be heard, in which case the appeal shall be heard at a later board of directors meeting.

(3) The council shall notify the applicant or certificate holder of its right to request an appeal pursuant to paragraph (1) at the time of the final decision.

(k) This section governs only the procedures for denial or discipline decision and not the substantive grounds for the denial or discipline. Denial or discipline based upon substantive grounds that violates contractual or other rights of the applicant or certificate holder, or is otherwise unlawful, is not made valid by compliance with this section.

**4611.** (a) It is an unfair business practice for a person to do any of the following:

(1) To hold himself or herself out or to use the title of “certified massage therapist” or “certified massage practitioner,” or any other term, such as “licensed,” “certified,” “CMT,” or “CMP,” in any manner whatsoever that implies or suggests that the person is certified as a massage therapist or massage practitioner, unless that person currently holds an active and valid certificate issued by the council pursuant to this chapter.

(2) To falsely state or advertise or put out any sign or card or other device, or to falsely represent to the public through any print or electronic media, that he or she or any other individual is licensed, certified, or registered by a governmental agency as a massage therapist or massage practitioner.

(b) In addition to any other available remedies, engaging in any of the prohibited behaviors described in subdivision (a) constitutes unfair competition under Section 17200.

**4612.** (a) Notwithstanding any other law, a city, county, or city and county shall not enact or enforce an ordinance that conflicts with this chapter or Section 51034 of the Government Code.

(b) Nothing in this chapter shall prevent a city, county, or city and county from licensing, regulating, prohibiting, or permitting an individual who provides massage for compensation without a valid certificate.

**4614.** (a) Upon the request of any law enforcement agency or any other representative of a local government agency with responsibility for regulating or administering a local ordinance relating to massage or massage establishments, the council shall provide information concerning an applicant or a certificate holder, including, but not limited to, any of the following:

(1) The current status of an application or certificate.

(2) Any history of disciplinary actions.

(3) The home and work addresses of the applicant or certificate holder.

(4) The name and home and work addresses of any person whose certificate has been suspended and the length of the suspension, if the work address is located within the jurisdiction of agency making the request.

(5) Any other information in the council’s possession that is necessary to verify facts relevant to administering the local ordinance.

- (b) Upon the request of the council, any law enforcement agency or any other representative of a local government agency with responsibility for regulating or administering a local ordinance relating to massage or massage establishments is authorized to provide information to the council concerning an applicant or certificate holder, including, but not limited to, any of the following:
- (1) The current status of any local application or permit.
  - (2) Any history of legal or administrative action taken against the applicant or certificate holder.
  - (3) Any information related to criminal activity or unprofessional conduct allegedly engaged in by a certificate applicant or certificate holder, including, but not limited to, police reports and declarations of conduct.
  - (4) The home and work addresses of the applicant or certificate holder.
  - (5) Any other information in the possession of the law enforcement agency or other local government agency that is necessary to verify information or otherwise implement this chapter.
- (c) The council shall accept information provided by any law enforcement agency or any other representative of a local government agency with responsibility for regulating or administering a local ordinance relating to massage and review that information in a timely manner. The council shall have the responsibility to review any information received pursuant to this subdivision and to take any actions authorized by this chapter that are warranted by that information.

**4615.** (a) The council shall have the responsibility to determine whether the school from which an applicant has obtained the education required by this chapter meets the requirements of this chapter.

- (1) If the council has any reason to question whether or not the applicant received the education that is required by this chapter from the school or schools that the applicant is claiming, the council may investigate the facts to determine that the applicant received the required education before issuing a certificate.
  - (2) For purposes of this section and any other provision of this chapter that authorizes the council to receive factual information as a condition of taking any action, the council may conduct oral interviews of the applicant and others or conduct any investigation deemed necessary to establish that the information received is accurate and satisfies the criteria established by this chapter.
- (b) (1) The council shall develop policies, procedures, rules, or bylaws governing the requirements and process for approving, denying approval of, imposing corrective action on, or unapproving schools consistent with Section 4601. These policies, procedures, rules, or bylaws shall address topics, including, but not limited to, what constitutes an acceptable curriculum, facility requirements, student-teacher ratios, clinical practice requirements, and provisions for the acceptance of accreditation from a recognized accreditation body or other form of acceptance.
- (2) The approval process for a school shall be consistent with the following timelines:
- (A) (i) On or before 30 days from the date the council receives an initial application for school approval, the council shall notify the school whether or not, for the purpose of preliminary review, the application is complete.

(ii) A notice that an initial application is not complete for the purpose of preliminary review shall specify what additional documents or payment of fees the school is required to submit to the council to make the application complete for the purpose of preliminary review.

(B) Within 60 days from the date the council notifies the school that the initial application is not complete for purposes of preliminary review, the school shall provide the missing information and pay the required fees. If a school fails to do so, the council shall purge the application. The council may, in its sole discretion, provide a school with an additional 30 days to make its application complete for purposes of preliminary review. A school with a purged application may submit a new application for school approval, including the required fees, without prejudice, after 180 days have passed from the effective date of purging. The council shall post on its internet website the effective date of purging.

(C) (i) On or before one year from the date the council receives an initial application for approval as a school, the council shall approve the school, propose to deny approval of the school, or notify the school that corrective action is required. The council reserves the right to issue a one-time notice of corrective action on an initial application. If the school fails to adequately rectify the deficiencies, the council may deny the application.

(ii) Within one year from the date that the council notifies a school of its proposed decision to deny approval of an initial application for school approval, the council shall notify the school of its final decision pursuant to any oral telephonic hearing or consideration of a written statement provided in opposition to the proposed decision to deny approval of the initial application for school approval.

(D) A school may appeal the council's final decision to deny approval of the school. An appeal of the council's final decision to deny approval of a school shall be heard at the next board of directors meeting with a date, as posted on the council's internet website, that is at least 120 days from the last date for the school to timely request an appeal, unless a timely request for a continuance of the hearing date is granted. The council may, in its discretion, for good cause, continue the date an appeal may be heard, in which case the appeal shall be heard at a later board of directors meeting. The council shall notify the school of its right to appeal pursuant to this subdivision at the time of the final decision.

(3) The council shall exercise its authority to approve, deny approval of, and unapprove schools and specify corrective action in keeping with the purposes set forth in Section 4603.

(c) The council may charge a reasonable fee for the inspection or approval of schools, provided the fees do not exceed the reasonable cost of the inspection or approval process.

(d) The council shall note on its internet website the date that a letter proposing to deny a school's application for approval or reapproval or requesting corrective action has been sent to the school and the final outcome and date of that proposed action.

(e) For purposes of this section, the following terms have the following meanings:

(1) "Initial application" means a new application submitted by a school for school approval.

(2) "Complete application," for purposes of preliminary review, means an application that the council, after preliminary review, has determined contains all the necessary documents for the council to begin a more thorough review process that allows the council to make a decision to approve or propose to deny the application for school

approval or request corrective action. A complete application is not an approved application and a determination by the council upon preliminary review that an application is complete shall not prejudice the council's ability to later determine that the application is not complete.

(3) "Preliminary review" means an initial review conducted by the council to determine if all fees have been paid and if all application and supporting documents have been submitted, so that the council can move forward and begin a more thorough review process. The preliminary review process does not include completion of a site visit or completion of background checks for noncertified individuals.

**4615.5.** A school offering a professional massage therapy program that has not been approved by the council pursuant to this chapter, before enrolling a student in the school, shall notify the student in writing and obtain a signed confirmation from the student that the student has received written notification of the following:

(a) That the school is not approved by the council.

(b) That the education completed at the school cannot be used to satisfy any of the requirements for certification as a massage therapist or massage practitioner in California.

**4616.** The council shall be sued only in the county of its principal office, which shall be in Sacramento, unless otherwise designated by the council.

**4617.** The superior court of a county of competent jurisdiction may, upon a petition by any person, issue an injunction or any other relief the court deems appropriate for a violation of this chapter by any person or establishment operating in that county subject to the provisions of this chapter. An injunction proceeding under this section shall be governed by Chapter 3 (commencing with Section 525) of Title 7 of Part 2 of the Code of Civil Procedure.

**4618.** The Legislature finds and declares that due to important health, safety, and welfare concerns that affect the entire state, establishing a uniform standard of certification for massage practitioners and massage therapists upon which consumers may rely to identify individuals who have achieved specified levels of education, training, and skill is a matter of statewide concern and not a municipal affair, as that term is used in Section 5 of Article XI of the California Constitution. Therefore, this chapter shall apply to all cities, counties, and cities and counties, including charter cities and charter counties.

**4619.** (a) This chapter shall be liberally construed to effectuate its purposes.

(b) The provisions of this chapter are severable. If any provision of this chapter or its application is held invalid, that invalidity shall not affect other provisions or applications that can be given effect without the invalid provision or application.

(c) If any provision of this chapter or the application of these provisions to any person or circumstance is held to be invalid, the invalidity shall not affect other provisions or applications of the chapter that can be given effect without the invalid provision or application, and to this end the provisions of this chapter are severable.

- 4620.** (a) On or before January 1, 2017, for the time period beginning on January 1, 2015, the council shall provide a report to the appropriate policy committees of the Legislature that includes all of the following:
- (1) A feasibility study of licensure for the massage profession, including a proposed scope of practice, legitimate techniques of massage, and related statutory recommendations.
  - (2) The council's compensation guidelines and current salary levels.
  - (3) The status of the council's progress towards revising the school approval process.
  - (4) Performance metrics, including, but not limited to:
    - (A) The annual number of denied certificate applications, and a brief description of the grounds for each decision.
    - (B) The annual number of suspended, revoked, or otherwise disciplined certificates, and a brief description of the grounds for each decision.
    - (C) The number of certificates taken off suspension, and a brief description of the grounds for each decision.
    - (D) The number of schools inspected and unapproved and a brief description of the grounds for each decision to unapprove.
    - (E) The total number of complaints about certificate holders received annually, including a subtotal of complaints received from local law enforcement and the action taken by the council as a result of those complaints.
- (b) The council shall testify in person if requested by the appropriate policy committees of the Legislature.
- (c) This section shall be repealed on January 1, 2021.

- 4621.** (a) This chapter shall remain in effect only until January 1, 2030, and as of that date is repealed.
- (b) Notwithstanding any other law, the powers and duties of the council shall be subject to review by the appropriate policy committees of the Legislature.

## **EDUCATION CODE SECTION 94934.5**

- 94934.5.** (a) An institution with an approval to operate that knows that it is being investigated by an oversight entity other than the bureau shall report that investigation, including the nature of that investigation, to the bureau in writing within 30 days of the institution's first knowledge of the investigation. An institution with an approval to operate that is the subject of a judgment by, a regulatory action by, increased oversight or monitoring by, or a settlement with, any oversight entity other than the bureau shall report it to the bureau within 30 days. Failure to comply with this section may subject the institution to an administrative citation pursuant to Section 94936.
- (b) For the purposes of this section, "investigation" means any inquiry into possible violations of any applicable laws or accreditation standards.
- (c) For the purposes of this section, "oversight entity" means all of the following:
- (1) Any governmental agency.
  - (2) Any accrediting agency.
  - (3) Any professional licensing entity that exercises any programmatic or institutional approval over the institution.

(4) Any private entity authorized pursuant to any provision of the Business and Professions Code to approve schools or educational programs for purposes of a professional certification.

## **GOVERNMENT CODE SECTION 51034**

**51034.** (a) The Legislature in enacting this chapter recognizes the existing power of a city or county to regulate a lawful massage business pursuant to Section 37101, or pursuant to Section 16000 or 16100 of the Business and Professions Code, or under Section 7 of Article XI of the California Constitution.

(b) Nothing contained in this chapter shall be a limitation on that existing power or on the existing authority of a city to license for revenue purposes. A city, county, or city and county shall not enact or enforce an ordinance that conflicts with the provisions of this section or Chapter 10.5 (commencing with Section 4600) of Division 2 of the Business and Professions Code.

(c) Nothing contained in this chapter shall authorize a city, county, or city and county to do any of the following:

(1) Prohibit a person of one sex from engaging in the massage of a person of the other sex.

(2) Define a massage establishment as an adult entertainment business, or otherwise regulate a massage establishment as adult entertainment.

(3) Require a massage establishment to have windows or walls that do not extend from the floor to ceiling, or have other internal physical structures, including windows, that interfere with a client's reasonable expectation of privacy.

(4) Require a massage establishment to have a shower or bath.

(5) Impose client draping requirements that extend beyond the covering of genitalia and female breasts, or otherwise mandate that the client wear special clothing.

(6) Prohibit a massage establishment from locking its external doors if the massage establishment is a business entity owned by one individual with one or no employees or independent contractors.

(7) Require a massage establishment to post any notice in an area that may be viewed by clients that contains explicit language describing sexual acts, mentions genitalia, or specific contraception devices.

(8) Impose a requirement that a person certified pursuant to Chapter 10.5 (commencing with Section 4600) of Division 2 of the Business and Professions Code take any test, medical examination, or background check, including a criminal background check or requiring submission of fingerprints for a federal or state criminal background check, or comply with education requirements beyond what is required by Chapter 10.5 (commencing with Section 4600) of Division 2 of the Business and Professions Code.

(9) Impose a requirement that an individual holding a certificate issued in accordance with Chapter 10.5 (commencing with Section 4600) of Division 2 of the Business and Professions Code, obtain any other license, permit, certificate, or other authorization to provide massage for compensation. However, this paragraph shall not be construed to prohibit a city, county, or city and county from requiring by ordinance that a massage business or establishment obtain a license, permit, certificate, or other authorization in order to operate lawfully within the jurisdiction.

(10) Impose a dress code requirement on a person certified pursuant to Chapter 10.5 (commencing with Section 4600) of Division 2 of the Business and Professions Code in excess of those already imposed pursuant to paragraph (10) of subdivision (a) of Section 4609 of the Business and Professions Code.

(11) Prohibit a person certified pursuant to Chapter 10.5 (commencing with Section 4600) of Division 2 of the Business and Professions Code from performing massage for compensation on the gluteal muscles, prohibit specific massage techniques recognized by the California Massage Therapy Council as legitimate, or impose any other specific restriction on professional practice beyond those set forth in subparagraph (E) of paragraph (1) of subdivision (a) of Section 4609 of the Business and Professions Code, except as authorized by Section 460 of the Business and Professions Code.

## **PENAL CODE SECTIONS 628 - 628.5**

**628.** A person who provides a certificate, transcript, diploma, or other document, or otherwise affirms that a person has received instruction in massage therapy knowing that the person has not received instruction in massage therapy or knowing that the person has not received massage therapy instruction consistent with that document or affirmation is guilty of a misdemeanor and is punishable by a fine of not more than two thousand five hundred dollars (\$2,500) per violation, or imprisonment in a county jail for not more than one year, or by both that fine and imprisonment.

**628.5.** For any person that is criminally prosecuted for a violation of law in connection with massage therapy, including for crimes relating to prostitution, the arresting law enforcement agency may provide to the California Massage Therapy Council, created pursuant to Section 4600.5 of the Business and Professions Code, information concerning the massage therapy instruction received by the person prosecuted, including the name of the school attended, if any.