Frequently Asked Questions for New Regulations

Effective January 13, 2017, new regulations are now in effect for the Board of Registration of Massage Therapy which implemented both major and minor changes to several portions of the Board’s regulations, specifically in sections of 269 CMR 3.00, 5.00 and 6.00. The purpose of these frequently asked questions is to assist licensees and the public in understanding these changes. Many of the changes were simple substantive changes to the existing language.

1. How have the educational requirements for licensure changed?

   **Answer:**
   - The educational requirements have been greatly streamlined and simplified. Of course, an applicant must still complete a program at a licensed massage therapy school with at least 650 classroom hours. Of this, 300 hours require supervised classroom hours in Massage Theory & Technique, in which the first 150 hours involves the study of massage practices and theory related to the systematic treatment of the soft tissues of the body to demonstrate muscle excursion or muscle flexibility, in which the primary intent is to enhance or restore the health and well-being of the client. These hours involve the study of the so called statutory definition of massage, or Western Theory and Techniques.

     The remaining (150 hours) can involve either the techniques and practices stated above or the study of bodywork practices and theory related to the use of touch, words or directed movement in which the primary intent is either to deepen awareness of patterns of movement in the body, or to deepen awareness of the affectation of the human energy system, acupoints or Qi meridians of the human body. This involves the study of the so called exempt modalities or Eastern Theory and Techniques. This requirement can be met by the study of any combination of massage practices and theory or bodywork practices and theory.

     - 100 hours of unpaid and supervised clinical internship or externship experience is still required.
     - 250 hours further study related to the massage therapy field and the practice of massage therapy.

   1 For example, the study of kinesiology, anatomy and physiology, pathology, ethics, professionalism or business practices or such similar study as the board may approve, at a licensed massage school, in which the predominant, but not exclusive, focus of the course relates to massage practices and theory as is here defined.

2. How have treatment notes or other medical records changed?

   **Answer:**
   - Now all client documentation must be contemporaneously created, meaning you must create the documentation at or shortly after the encounter with the client.

3. How have establishment licenses changed?

   **Answer:**
   - Because the Board has eliminated most exemptions, virtually all practitioners must obtain or be affiliated with an establishment license. This is in addition to your own individual license as a Massage Therapist.
No matter how many hours you work per week or whether you see patients in your office or outside your office, all practitioners need an establishment license. The type of license you need depends upon whether you are a Solo practitioner (Solo Establishment License) or practice with other massage therapist (Multiple Establishment License). If you own the massage therapy practice, you must obtain the license. If you work for a massage therapy practice, you must be identified as an employee on the license. The only exemption to the requirement to obtain or be associated with an establishment license are if you are associated with a Department of Public Health Clinic license or if you do not engage in the practice of massage therapy.

You can submit an application by uploading the Solo Therapist Establishment application or Multiple Therapist Establishment application or submit your application online via the E-Place portal. Please be advised, that you may be required to upload additional documents with your establishment application if you wish to submit the application online. Failure to upload documents may result in delay of the application process.

4. When must I obtain local permits so my establishment license can be approved?

Answer:

- Local permitting process required for initial establishment licensure is now more flexible. This will not hold up an application as it can either be submitted with the application or subsequent to receiving the establishment license. Applicants are however encouraged to submit copies of all local permits at the time of application.

5. Are there other changes made to the regulations?

Answer:

Yes. The following minor changes have been made in the following sections of the regulations:

- 3.02 restates the requirements for renewal of lapsed or expired license.
- 5.01(6) creates an exemption to client information confidentiality in order to prevent reasonably foreseeable harm.
- 6.02 amends relevant definition to confirm to other chapter changes.
- 6.05 is a technical correction.
- 6.06 corrects a reference to maintain consistency.
- 6.07 (10) clarifies the variance petition procedure and eliminates outdated language related to licensure by grandfathering which ended in 2010.
- 6.09 (1) inserts a legal reference.

Should you have any additional questions, please send your inquiry to MassageTherapy@state.ma.us and in the subject line include the words “Regulation Changes”. You may also contact the board via phone at 617-727-1747.