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TO: Private Occupational Schools and Other Interested Parties
FROM: Division of Professional Licensure; Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
RE: Licensure and Oversight of Private Occupational Massage Therapy Schools
DATE: September 2, 2010

On June 29, 2006, Chapter 135 of the Acts of 2006 was enacted. It required the Division of Professional Licensure (DPL) to organize a Board of Registration of Massage Therapy (Board). The Board has promulgated rules and regulations governing the licensure of Massage Therapists and facilities. While authorized to do so, the Board has not yet promulgated regulations regarding the operation of Massage Therapy schools.

Since no school rules have been promulgated, private business schools that offer courses or programs in Massage Therapy must be licensed by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's (DESE) Office of Proprietary Schools. Thus until further notice, DESE—in agreement with DPL—continues to license private business schools that provide Massage Therapy instruction.

The Massage Board enabling statutes and regulations (269 CMR) define Massage Therapy and specifically exclude a number of practices using touch, words, or directed movement. Regulation of these “body work” practices remains with the municipalities; schools are regulated by DESE.

Since Massage Therapy is a licensed profession, schools offering programs must ensure that their graduates meet the requirements of the Board. To qualify for licensure applicants must be graduates of an integrated 650-hour course of in-classroom study that includes 550 hours of academic courses and 100 hours of unpaid, supervised clinical experience. Within the academic courses there shall be 100 hours in the Anatomy & Physiology of the Body; 45 hours in Pathology; 45 hours in Kinesiology; 60 hours in Ethics, Professionalism & Business Practices, and 300 hours of supervised classroom Massage Theory & Technique. **The theory and techniques must be pertinent to Massage Therapy as defined by the Board's statutes and regulations.** Courses or topics such as First Aid, Reflexology or other excluded modalities may not be included in the 300 hour minimum.

The latest information and links to the statutes and regulations will always be posted on the Board's website, www.mass.gov/dpl/boards/mt. If you have any questions, please contact the Board via the website or DESE's Office of Proprietary Schools at proprietaryschools@doe.mass.edu.

