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New Jersey Board of Massage and Bodywork Therapy Law

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45:11-53. Short title.

This act shall be known and may be cited as the "Massage and Bodywork Therapist Licensing Act."

L.1999, c.19, s.1; amended 2007, c.337, s.2.

45:11-54. Findings, declarations relative to practice of massage and bodywork therapies.

The Legislature finds and declares that:

- a. the public interest requires the regulation of the practice of massage and bodywork therapies and the establishment of clear licensure standards for massage and bodywork therapists;
- b. the health and welfare of the citizens of this State will be protected by identifying to the public those individuals who are qualified to practice massage and bodywork therapies; and
- c. the regulation of massage and bodywork therapists will benefit the public by encouraging it to take advantage of massage and bodywork therapies as a viable complement to traditional medicine.

L.1999, c.19, s.2; amended 2007, c.337, s.3.

45:11-55. Definitions relative to practice of massage and bodywork therapies.

As used in P.L.1999, c.19 (C.45:11-53 et seq.) and P.L.2007, c.337 (C.45:11-68 et al.):

"Board" means the New Jersey Board of Massage and Bodywork Therapy established pursuant to section 14 of P.L.2007, c.337 (C.45:11-69).

"Licensee" means any person who holds a license to practice massage and bodywork therapies pursuant to the provisions of P.L.1999, c.19 (C.45:11-53 et seq.) and P.L.2007, c.337 (C.45:11-68 et al.).

"Massage and bodywork therapist" means a person licensed to practice massage and bodywork therapies pursuant to the provisions of P.L.1999, c.19 (C.45:11-53 et seq.) and P.L.2007, c.337 (C.45:11-68 et al.).

"Massage and bodywork therapies" or "massage and bodywork" means systems of activity of structured touch which include, but are not limited to, holding, applying pressure, positioning and mobilizing soft tissue of the body by manual technique and use of visual, kinesthetic, auditory and palpating skills to assess the body for purposes of applying therapeutic massage and bodywork principles. Such application may include, but is not limited to, the use of therapies such as heliotherapy or hydrotherapy, the use of moist hot and cold external applications, explaining and describing myofascial movement, self-care and stress management as it relates to massage and bodywork therapies. Massage and bodywork therapy practices are designed to affect the soft tissue of the body for the purpose of promoting and maintaining the health and well-being of the client. Massage and bodywork therapies do not include the diagnosis of illness, disease, impairment or disability.

L.1999, c.19, s.3; amended 2007, c.337, s.4.

45:11-59. Duties, responsibilities of board.

The board shall:

- a. Review the qualifications of applicants for licensure;
 - b. Insure the proper conduct and standards of examinations;
 - c. Issue and renew licenses to massage and bodywork therapists pursuant to P.L.1999, c.19 (C.45:11-53 et seq.) and P.L.2007, c.337 (C.45:11-68 et al.);
 - d. Suspend, revoke or fail to renew the license of a massage and bodywork therapist pursuant to the provisions of P.L.1978, c.73 (C.45:1-14 et seq.);
 - e. Establish any standards for the continuing education of licensees as it deems necessary;
 - f. Prescribe or change the charges for examinations, licensures, renewals and other services performed pursuant to P.L.1974, c.46 (C.45:1-3.1 et seq.); and
 - g. Maintain a record of every massage and bodywork therapist licensed in this State, and the date and number of his license, and publish a list of the names and addresses of all licensees annually.
- L.1999, c.19, s.7; amended 2007, c.337, s.5.

45:11-60. Eligibility for licensure.

To be eligible for licensure as a massage and bodywork therapist, an applicant shall be of good moral character and submit to the board satisfactory evidence of:

- a. Successful completion of a minimum of 500 hours in class study in the field of massage and bodywork therapies approved by the board; and
- b. Successful completion of a written examination approved by the board, which shall consider relevant education, training and practical work experience, to determine the applicant's competence to practice massage and bodywork therapies.

L.1999, c.19, s.8; amended 2007, c.337, s.6; 2017, c.56.

45:11-61. Current practitioners, eligibility for certification.

For 720 days after the date procedures are established by the committee for applying for certification under section 8 of this act, any person who engaged in the full-time practice, as determined by the committee, of massage, bodywork and somatic therapies for two years preceding the enactment date of this act, or in the part-time practice, as determined by the committee, of massage, bodywork and somatic therapies for five years preceding the enactment date of this act, and has successfully completed a minimum of 200 hours of education or training in massage, bodywork and somatic therapies as determined by the committee, may acquire a certificate of certification without satisfying either the education or examination requirement of section 8 of this act.

L.1999,c.19,s.9.

45:11-62. Application; fee; renewal.

A fee to be determined by the board shall accompany each application for licensure. Licenses shall expire biennially and may be renewed upon submission of a renewal application provided by the board and payment of a fee. If the renewal fee is not paid by that date, the license shall automatically expire, but may be renewed within two years of its expiration date on payment to the board of a sum determined by the board for each year or part thereof during which the license was expired and an additional restoration fee. After a two-year period, a license may only be renewed by complying with the provisions of P.L.1999, c.19 (C.45:11-53 et seq.) and P.L.2007, c.337 (C.45:11-68 et al.) regarding initial licensure.

L.1999, c.19, s.10; amended 2007, c.337, s.7.

45:11-63. Issuance of license.

The board shall issue a license to each applicant for licensure as a massage and bodywork therapist who qualifies pursuant to P.L.1999, c.19 (C.45:11-53 et seq.) and P.L.2007, c.337 (C.45:11-68 et al.) and any rules and regulations promulgated by the board and who is not disqualified for licensure pursuant to the provisions of P.L.1978, c.73 (C.45:1-14 et seq.).

L.1999, c.19, s.11; amended 2007, c.337, s.8.

45:11-64. Licensure without examination based on out-of-State license or certification.

Upon payment to the board of a fee and the submission of a written application on forms provided by it, the board shall issue without examination a license to a massage and bodywork therapist who holds a valid license or certification issued by another state or possession of the United States or the District of Columbia which has education and experience requirements substantially equivalent to the requirements of P.L.1999, c.19 (C.45:11-53 et seq.) and P.L.2007, c.337 (C.45:11-68 et al.).

L.1999, c.19, s.12; amended 2007, c.337, s.9.

45:11-67. Rules, regulations.

The board, after consultation with the committee, shall adopt rules and regulations pursuant to the "Administrative Procedure Act," P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.) necessary to effectuate the purposes of this act.

L.1999,c.19,s.15.

45:11-68. Construction of act.

a. Nothing in this amendatory and supplementary act shall be construed to prohibit any person licensed to practice in this State under any other law from engaging in or using titles consistent with the practice for which he is licensed or to prohibit any student enrolled in a program of massage and bodywork therapies recognized by the board from performing massage and bodywork therapies which are necessary to his course of study.

b. Nothing in this amendatory and supplementary act shall be construed to prohibit any person performing massage and bodywork therapies in this State, if those therapies are performed for no more than 45 days in a calendar year and for no more than 30 days in any 60-consecutive day period and provided that the person is duly licensed, certified or registered to practice massage and bodywork therapy in another state or the District of Columbia.

c. Nothing in this amendatory and supplementary act shall be construed to prohibit any person from engaging in the manipulation of soft tissue of the human body contained on hands, feet or ears, provided that the client does not remove any clothing other than shoes or socks.

d. Nothing in this amendatory and supplementary act shall be construed to prohibit any teacher from demonstrating massage and bodywork techniques while teaching a class or workshop if the individual is duly licensed by another state or possession of the United States or the District of Columbia to practice massage and bodywork therapies if that state or district of residence requires such licensure for an individual to practice massage and bodywork therapies.

e. Nothing in this amendatory and supplementary act shall be construed to prohibit any person from using touch, words and directed movement to deepen awareness of existing patterns of movement in the body, or to suggest new possibilities of movement provided that these services are not designated or implied to be massage and bodywork therapy and the client is fully clothed.

L.2007, c.337, s.13.

45:11-69. New Jersey Board of Massage and Bodywork Therapy.

There is created within the Division of Consumer Affairs in the Department of Law and Public Safety the New Jersey Board of Massage and Bodywork Therapy. The board shall consist of nine members who are residents of the State, two of whom shall be public members appointed pursuant to the provisions of subsection b. of section 2 of P.L.1971, c.60 (C.45:1-2.2) and one of whom shall be a member of the Executive Branch appointed in fulfillment of the requirement of subsection c. of that section. The six remaining members shall have been actively engaged in the practice of massage and bodywork therapies for at least five years immediately preceding their appointment and all of whom, except for the members first appointed, shall be licensed as massage and bodywork therapists pursuant to this amendatory and supplementary act. No more than one member of the board shall be an owner of, or be affiliated with, a school teaching massage and bodywork therapy.

The Governor shall appoint each member, other than the State executive department member, for terms of three years, except that of the massage and bodywork therapists first appointed, two shall serve for a term of three years, two shall serve for terms of two years and two shall serve for terms of one year. Any vacancy in the membership shall be filled for the unexpired term in the manner provided by the original appointment. No member of the board may serve more than two successive terms in addition to any unexpired term to which he has been appointed. The Governor may remove any member of the board, other than the State executive department member, for cause.

L.2007, c.337, s.14.

45:11-70. Compensation for board members.

Members of the board shall be compensated and reimbursed for expenses and provided with office and meeting facilities pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1977, c.285 (C.45:1-2.5).

L.2007, c.337, s.15.

45:11-71. Election of officers, meetings.

The board shall annually elect from among its members a chairman and a vice-chairman and may appoint a secretary, who need not be a member of the board. The board shall meet at least once every two months and may hold additional meetings as necessary to discharge its duties.

L.2007, c.337, s.16.

45:11-72. Continuing education requirements.

a. The board shall require each person licensed as a massage and bodywork therapist, as a condition for biennial license renewal pursuant to section 1 of P.L.1972, c.108 (C.45:1-7), to complete any continuing education requirements imposed by the board pursuant to this section.

b. The board shall:

(1) Establish standards for continuing massage and bodywork therapist education, including: the number of credits, which shall not exceed 24 credit hours biennially; the subject matter and content of courses of study; competency assessments; and the type of continuing education credits required of a licensed massage and bodywork therapist as a condition of license renewal;

(2) Approve educational programs offering credit towards continuing massage and bodywork therapist education requirements; and

(3) Approve other equivalent educational programs and establish procedures for the issuance of credit upon satisfactory proof of the completion of those programs. In the case of continuing education courses and programs, each hour of instruction shall be equivalent to one credit.

c. The board shall only approve programs that are provided on a nondiscriminatory basis.

d. (1) The board may, in its discretion, waive requirements for continuing education on an individual basis for reasons of hardship, such as disability, retirement of the license, military service or deployment, or any other good cause.

(2) If a massage and bodywork therapist completes a number of continuing education credit hours in excess of the number required for a biennial period, the board, by rule or regulation, may allow credits to be carried over to satisfy the person's continuing education requirement for the next biennial renewal period, but shall not be applicable thereafter.

L.2007, c.337, s.17.

45:11-73. Licensure required for use of certain titles.

a. No person shall engage in the practice of massage and bodywork therapies as a licensed massage and bodywork therapist or present, call or represent himself as a licensed massage and bodywork therapist unless licensed pursuant to this amendatory and supplementary act.

b. No person shall assume, represent himself as, or use the title or designation "massage or bodywork therapist," "licensed massage and bodywork therapist" or any title or designation which includes the words "massage," "bodywork," "masseur," "masseuse," "shiatsu," "acupressure," "accupressure," "accu-pressure," "nuad bo'rarn," "amma," "anma," "chi nei tsang," "tuina," "polarity educator," "polarity therapist," "polarity therapy," "polarity practitioner" or any of the abbreviations

"MT," "BT," "MBT," "MBST," "CMBT," "COBT," "CMT," "LBT," "LMBST," "LMBT," "LABT," "LOBT," "AB," "ABT," "OB," "RPP," or "LMT" or similar abbreviations as determined by the board, unless licensed under this amendatory and supplementary act.

L.2007, c.337, s.18.

45:11-74. Certain certified practitioners considered licensed.

Any person who is a certified massage, bodywork and somatic therapist pursuant to section 8 or 9 of P.L.1999, c.19 (C.45:11-60 or 45:11-61) on the effective date of P.L.2007, c.337 (C.45:11-68 et al.) shall be a licensed massage and bodywork therapist under and subject to the provisions of P.L.1999, c.19 (C.45:11-53 et seq.) and P.L.2007, c.337 (C.45:11-68 et al.).

L.2007, c.337, s.19.

45:11-75. Certain practitioners eligible for licensure without satisfying education examination requirements.

For 360 days after the date procedures are established by the board for applying for licensure under the provisions of P.L.2007, c.337 (C.45:11-68 et al.), any person who engaged in the full-time practice, as determined by the board, of massage and bodywork therapies for two years preceding the enactment date of P.L.2007, c.337 (C.45:11-68 et al.), or in the part-time practice, as determined by the board, of massage and bodywork therapies for five years preceding the enactment date of P.L.2007, c.337 (C.45:11-68 et al.), and has successfully completed a minimum of 200 hours of education or training in massage or bodywork therapies as determined by the board, may acquire a license to practice massage and bodywork therapies without satisfying either the education or examination requirement of section 8 of P.L.1999, c.19 (C.45:11-60).

L.2007, c.337, s.20.

45:11-76. Registration required for advertising as massage, bodywork therapist; application fee.

- a. No employer shall engage in or advertise or hold itself out as offering massage and bodywork therapies unless the employer is registered with the board.
- b. A written application for registration shall be made to the board on the form prescribed by the board and shall contain the following information:
 - (1) The name and residence of the owner or operator of the entity providing massage and bodywork therapies;
 - (2) The municipality and location of the owner or operator's primary place of business and the locations of all other branches of business; and
 - (3) Any other biographical information of the applicant as required by the board.
- c. Each applicant for registration and each registrant pursuant to the provisions of this section shall pay to the board a fee for the issuance of a two-year registration in the amount established by the board in accordance with the provisions of P.L.1974, c.46 (C.45:1-3.1 et seq.).

L.2007, c.337, s.21.

45:11-77. Suspension, revocation of registration.

The board may suspend or revoke the registration of an employer offering massage and bodywork therapies upon proof showing by a preponderance of the evidence that the employer:

- a. Has made false or misleading statements of a material nature in the application for registration; or
- b. Failed to demonstrate that each employee of the employer who is engaged in the performance of massage and bodywork therapies is in possession of a license to practice massage and bodywork therapies.

L.2007, c.337, s.22.

45:11-78. Supersedure of municipal ordinance, regulation.

This act shall supersede any municipal ordinance or regulation that provides for the licensing, certification or registration of massage and bodywork therapists.

L.2007, c.337, s.23.

45:11-79. Effective date; rules required.

Section 14 of this act shall take effect immediately. The remaining sections of this act shall not become effective until such time as the New Jersey Board of Massage and Bodywork Therapy, established pursuant to section 14 of this act, shall adopt rules regulating the practice of massage and bodywork therapies.

L.2007, c.337, s.25.

45:11-80. Criminal history record background check for licensure as massage, bodywork therapist or employer.

An applicant for licensure as a massage and bodywork therapist or registration as an employer offering massage and bodywork therapies under P.L.1999, c.19 (C.45:11-53 et seq.) and P.L.2007, c.337 (C.45:11-68 et seq.), and any holder of a license or registration under P.L.1999, c.19 (C.45:11-53 et seq.) and P.L.2007, c.337 (C.45:11-68 et seq.) shall, consistent with section 8 of P.L.1978, c.73 (C.45:1-21) and supporting regulations by the New Jersey Board of Massage and Bodywork Therapy, be subject to a criminal history record background check, which may, consistent with that applicable law, result in a refusal to issue a license or certificate, or suspension or revocation of an existing license or certificate.

L.2013, c.51, s.21.