



Larry Hogan, Governor · Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor · Dennis R. Schrader, Acting Secretary

Board of Massage Therapy Examiners

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March 17, 2021

The Honorable Delores G. Kelley
Chair, Finance Committee
3 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: SB 894 – Post-Crisis Jobs Act of 2021 – Letter of Concern

Dear Chair Kelley and Committee Members:

The Board of Massage Therapy Examiners respectfully submits this letter of concern for Senate Bill (SB) 894 – Post-Crisis Jobs Act of 2021. SB 894 allows applicants to complete education or training requirements through a digital learning program, and continuing education requirements for renewal to be delivered in a digital format. It also requires funding for workforce training; establishes the Digital Learning Conversion Grant Program, the Basic Numeracy and Literacy Skills Grant Program, and the Recruitment of High Growth Industries Workers Grant Program in the Maryland Department of Labor.

The Board of Massage Therapy Examiners (the “Board”), understands the importance of digital learning and its vital role to continuing education, especially during these challenging times. The Board supports the efforts to simplify the process of continuing education. The Board would like to express significant concerns regarding the program position as it applies to massage therapy. Allowing a complete digital learning program would significantly decrease the quality of care in massage therapy.

Continuing education credits can be completed through digital learning for massage therapy. However, the initial application process to become a massage therapist in Maryland requires in-person, supervised hands-on contact hours. The initial educational process of massage therapy must, by the nature of the profession, be an in person, hands-on process. This requirement is critical to provide the optimal care, standards of competency, protection and safety to the citizens of Maryland. Also, it is vital to ensure minimum injuries and that proper techniques are learned and properly applied. Without this requirement, the potential is there for the citizens of Maryland to be seriously injured, which contradicts the Board’s primary mission to protect the public.

The Board hopes that this information is useful and we thank you for your consideration of our concerns. If you would like to discuss this further, please contact Caitlin Thompson, Board Chair, at 410-370-2789, caitlin.thompson@maryland.gov. In addition, the Board's Executive Director, Ms. Sharon Oliver, may be reached at 410-764-5985, sharon.oliver@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,

Caitlin Thompson

Caitlin Thompson
Caitlin Thompson, LMT
Board Chair

The opinion of the Board expressed in this document does not necessarily reflect that of the Department of Health or the Administration.