

Dear Chairman Stoltz, Chairman Austerman, Vice-Chairman Neuman and Members of the Committee,

My name is Victoria Dance, a massage therapist licensed in Arizona since 1984, when I also became a member of the AMTA. I have been working as a massage therapist at a medical clinic in Juneau for the last 6 years. I, and several other therapists, many who are small business owners, oppose HB328 because the bill does not reflect current industry standards for education.

- 500 hours is already required by municipal ordinances licensing massage therapists in Alaska
- 500 hours is an arbitrary number with no statistical foundation
- Over 1/3 of state massage laws require more than 500 hours.
- ELAP, the only source of data for massage therapy competency, recently recommended 625 hours.
- COMTA, specializing in accrediting massage therapy schools, requires 600 hours
- Title IV federal student aid requires a 600 hour curriculum

Before massage began to be used in medical offices, 500 hours of training satisfied what was needed to do relaxation massage. With the advance of medical massage, competency standards, based on a two year study, have been raised to 625 hours.

If HB328 is not going to advance the profession by using the competency standards of the industry, why should we have the burden of high regulation fees?

- No therapist in Alaska pays anywhere near the \$550 fee projected for Alaska
- 53% of states have fees of \$100 - \$150
- No Alaska municipal ordinances require more than \$200 for renewal.
- 77% of boards are in deficit and there is no ceiling on fee increases.
- An estimated 600 therapists will have to carry the burden of normal board fees and fees increased by investigations of massage parlor violations.

HB328 will not enable massage therapists to send claims into and be paid directly by insurance companies.

- The law must be for all therapists in Alaska, not just those who want to make insurance claims directly someday in the future.
- Less than ¼ of all massage therapists bill claims for workman's comp and MVA injury.
- There are only 3 states where massage is a health insurance benefit. Only one state mandates insurance companies to accept claims directly from massage therapists.
- The Division of Insurance testimony confirms that the insurance code is not changed in Alaska by HB328 to allow massage to be billed directly by a massage therapist.
- There is no increased income from developing an insurance-based clientele to offset higher fees

Seven states license massage therapists by ordinances similar to the proposed bill

- The state received no public complaints about massage. The bill was initiated by therapists.
- Massage therapists are already being regulated more efficiently and less expensively by cities.
- The public can be, and are being, protected by local licensing laws that can handle complaints and investigations more efficiently and cost effectively.

Thank you for your attention,

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MUNICIPAL LICENSING OF MASSAGE THERAPY

Massage Therapists are already being licensed more efficiently and less expensively by city ordinances which have similar requirements as more expensive state regulation.

Massage Therapy Licensing by Alaska Municipalities				
	Anchorage	Fairbanks	Palmer	Valdez
Qualifications	500 hrs or nat'l certification	Nat'l Board certification or 350 hours and 2 years experience	500 Hours or Board certification or out-of-state license	500 hours or Board certification or out-of-state license
Exam	none	none	none	none
Insurance	none	yes if member of professional organization	none	none
Background Check	yes	yes	yes	yes
Initial Fees	\$100	\$100	\$25	\$50
Renewal Fees	\$100 annual	\$200 biennial	\$25	\$25
City & State Business License	yes	yes	yes	yes

Some cities , in the six other states that regulate massage through city licensing, have in-depth ordinances.

St. Paul MN massage license requirements	Notarized NCBTMB certificate or 500 hours	National exam or a State written & practical exam	Professional and liability insurance	Background check & no convictions of moral turpitude.	CPR	Initial Fees: \$90 with nat'l exam; \$260 with state exam	Renewal Fee \$90 annually	City establishment license
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MAP OF LICENSING FEES IN STATES REGULATING MASSAGE THERAPISTS

