

ARKANSAS STATE BOARD OF HEALTH

MASSAGE THERAPY LAWS



2025

17-86-101. Citation

This chapter may be referred to and cited as the "Massage Therapy Act".

17-86-102. Definitions

As used in this chapter:

- (1) "Entity" means a corporation, association, limited liability company, general partnership, limited partnership, sole proprietorship, or other organization recognized under the laws of the State of Arkansas or any other state;
- (2) "Licensee" means an individual licensed under this chapter;
- (3)
 - (A) "Massage therapist" means a person who has:
 - (i) Earned a diploma from a State Board of Health accepted school of massage therapy;
 - (ii) Passed an examination required or accepted by the State Board of Health; and
 - (iii) Become licensed and registered to practice massage therapy.
 - (B) "Massage therapist" includes a person who has previously obtained the massage therapist license under prior state law.
 - (C) A massage therapist may:
 - (i) Instruct continuing education programs approved by the Department of Health; and
 - (ii) Assist in the instruction of the procedures defined in subdivisions (3)(A)-(C) of this section under the direct supervision of a massage therapy instructor or master massage therapist;
- (4)
 - (A) "Massage therapy" means the treatment of soft tissues, which may include skin, fascia, and muscles and their dysfunctions for therapeutic purposes of establishing and maintaining good physical condition, comfort, and relief of pain.
 - (B) "Massage therapy" is a healthcare service that includes gliding, kneading, percussion, compression, vibration, friction, nerve strokes, and stretching the tissue.
 - (C) "Massage therapy" also means to engage in the practice of any of the following procedures:
 - (i) Massage therapy techniques and procedures, either hands-on or with mechanical devices;
 - (ii) Therapeutic application and use of oils, herbal or chemical preparations, lubricants, nonprescription creams, lotions, scrubs, powders, and other spa services;
 - (iii) Therapeutic application of hot or cold packs;
 - (iv) Hydrotherapy techniques;
 - (v) Heliotherapy, which may include mechanical devices, heat lamps, and other devices;
 - (vi) Electrotherapy;
 - (vii) Any hands-on bodywork techniques and procedures rising to the level of the techniques and procedures intended to be regulated under this chapter and not covered under specific licensing laws of other boards; and
 - (viii) Cupping therapy;

- (5)** “Massage therapy apprentice” means a person who is enrolled in a massage therapy apprenticeship program;
- (6)** “Massage therapy apprenticeship program” means a program that meets the federal guidelines set out in 29 C.F.R. Part 29, as existing on March 1, 2021, and is approved by the United States Office of Apprenticeship;
- (7)** “Massage therapy establishment” means a location other than a massage therapy school in which massage therapy is performed including without limitation:
- (A)** A massage therapy clinic;
 - (B)** A massage therapy spa; or
 - (C)** An entity that contracts with or employs a massage therapist to provide massage therapy services at an alternate location, including without limitation a private residence, hotel, or other permanent or temporary dwelling;
- (8)** “Massage therapy establishment registration” means the mandatory registration with the department that permits the operation of a massage therapy establishment;
- (9)** “Massage therapy clinic” means a clinic, place, premises, building, or part of a building in which a branch or any combination of branches of massage therapy or the occupation of a massage therapist is practiced;
- (10)**
- (A)** “Massage therapy instructor” means a person who:
 - (i)** Before July 1, 2010, has completed no less than two hundred fifty (250) hours of practical experience as a master massage therapist, which may be gained, in part or in whole, as an assistant to an instructor in a massage school or may be gained, in part or in whole, as a directed instructor in a massage school and has completed no less than two hundred fifty (250) continuing education hours as approved by the department;
 - (ii)** On or after July 1, 2010, has been an active and practicing licensee and registered as a master massage therapist for a period of not less than three (3) years preceding the application for an upgrade to massage therapy instructor;
 - (iii)** On or after July 1, 2010, in addition to the experience under subdivision (5)(A)(i) of this section, has completed no less than two hundred fifty (250) continuing education hours as approved by the department as a licensed master massage therapist; and
 - (iv)** Is determined by the department to be qualified to be licensed and registered to practice massage therapy.
 - (B)** “Massage therapy instructor” includes a person who has previously obtained the massage therapy instructor license under prior state law.
 - (C)** Massage therapy instructors may:
 - (i)** Instruct continuing education programs approved by the department;
 - (ii)** Instruct any of the procedures in subdivision (3) of this section; and
 - (iii)** Instruct basic curricula in a massage therapy school registered by the department as required by § 17-86-306(e);

- (11)**“Massage therapy learning permit” means a permit issued by the Department of Health before enrollment in a massage therapy apprenticeship program or in a massage therapy school that is valid for no longer than six (6) months after completion of the apprenticeship or graduation from the massage therapy school;
- (12)**“Massage therapy school” means a registered and licensed facility that meets and follows the required educational standards as established by § 17-86-306 and all pertinent rules established by the State Board of Health;
- (13)**“Massage therapy spa” means a site or premises, or portion of a site or premises, in which a massage therapist practices massage;
- (14)**“Massage therapy student” means a person who is enrolled in a licensed massage therapy school or postsecondary massage therapy school.

(15)

(A) “Master massage therapist” means a person who:

(i) Before July 1, 2010, is a licensed and registered massage therapist who has completed no fewer than two hundred fifty (250) hours of practical experience as a massage therapist, which may be gained in part or in whole as an assistant to an instructor in a massage school and has completed no less than one hundred twenty-five (125) continuing education hours as approved by the department;

(ii) Either:

(a) On or after July 1, 2010, has:

(1) Been an active and practicing licensee and registered as a massage therapist for a period of not less than two (2) years preceding the application for an upgrade to master massage therapist; and

(2) in addition to the experience under subdivision (12)(A)(i) of this section, has completed no less than one hundred twenty-five (125) continuing education hours as approved by the department; or

(b) On or after July 1, 2023, has:

(1) Been an active practicing licensee and registered as a massage therapist for the period of not less than twelve (12) months preceding the application for an upgrade to master massage therapist; and

(2) Completed not less than three hundred (300) hours of advanced coursework in massage therapy as part of an Associate of Applied Science degree of massage therapy from an accredited college or university; and

(iii) Is determined by the department to be qualified to be licensed and registered to practice massage therapy.

(B) “Master massage therapist” includes a person who has previously obtained the master massage therapist license under a prior state law.

(C) Master massage therapists may:

(i) Instruct continuing education programs approved by the department;

- (ii) Instruct any of the procedures in subdivision (3) of this section; and
- (iii) Instruct, as directed by a massage therapy instructor, basic curricula in a massage therapy school registered by the department as required by § 17-86-306(e);

(16) "Postsecondary massage therapy school" means a massage therapy school that:

- (A) Offers a postsecondary curriculum approved by the State Board of Health; and
- (B) Has an enrollment in which no more than fifty percent (50%) of its students do not have a high school diploma or the recognized equivalent of a high school diploma;

(17) "Principal" means each owner, member, shareholder, partner, or other person with a financial interest in an entity applying for or holding a massage therapy establishment registration; and

(18) "Sexual misconduct" includes:

- (A) A range of behavior used to obtain sexual gratification against another's will, at the expense of another, without the client's knowledge, engaging in sexual activity for profit, or a combination of any of these activities;
- (B) Massage of the genitalia, anus, and, except under specific circumstances, the breast; and
- (C) Sexual activity with consent of a client or at the request of a client; and

17-86-103. Penalties

- (a) Any person who violates any of the provisions of this chapter shall be found guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction shall be punished by imprisonment in the county jail for not more than six (6) months or by a fine not exceeding one thousand five hundred dollars (\$1,500), or by both fine and imprisonment, at the discretion of the court.
- (b) It shall be the duty of the prosecuting attorney in the county where the violation occurs, upon request by the Department of Health, to initiate proper legal proceedings in a court of competent jurisdiction to enforce the provisions of this chapter.
- (c) Any person found guilty of violations of this chapter may be subject to emergency suspension or revocation of licensure dependent upon the findings.
- (d) The courts of this state are vested with jurisdiction and power to enjoin the unlawful practice of massage therapy and related techniques in a proceeding by the department or by any citizen of this state in the county in which the alleged unlawful practice occurred, the county in which the defendant resides, or in Pulaski County. The issuance of an injunction shall not relieve a person from criminal prosecution for violation of the provisions of this chapter, but the remedy of injunction shall be in addition to liability to criminal prosecution.

17-86-104. Criminal background checks

An applicant applying for enrollment in a massage therapy school, postsecondary massage therapy school, or massage therapy apprenticeship program or applying as a new massage therapy licensee, an individual applying for a new massage therapy school license, a person applying individually or as principal of an entity applying for a massage therapy establishment registration, or a licensee applying for an upgrade issued by the Department of Health shall

apply to the Identification Bureau of the Division of Arkansas State Police for a state and federal criminal background check to be conducted by the Identification Bureau of the Division of Arkansas State Police and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

17-86-201. Massage Therapy Technical Advisory Committee—Members

- (a) (1) The Massage Therapy Technical Advisory Committee shall consist of seven (7) members, who shall be appointed by the State Board of Health for a term of three (3) years.
 - (2) (A) Six (6) of the members shall be licensees under this chapter.
(B) Only one (1) of the members shall be an owner of a massage therapy school.
 - (3) One (1) member, to represent the public, shall not be engaged in or retired from the practice of massage therapy.
- (b) The State Board of Health shall promulgate by rule the duties and powers of the committee.

17-86-202. Employees

- (a) The Department of Health may employ an executive director, regular or special counsel, inspectors, clerks, secretaries, and other personnel it deems necessary to carry out the provisions of this chapter.
- (b) An employee under this section shall not have any financial interest in the practice or instruction of massage therapy.

17-86-203. Powers and duties

- (a) (1) The State Board of Health may promulgate and enforce reasonable rules for the purpose of carrying out this chapter.
- (2) The board shall follow the Arkansas Administrative Procedure Act, § 25-15-201 et seq., as to “rule” and “rulemaking” definitions and for the adoption and filing of rules.
- (b) (1) (A) The Department of Health shall inspect or cause an inspection of student records at least one (1) time each year for each massage therapy school operated in this state.
(B) The department and its agents and employees may enter and inspect a massage therapy establishment or massage therapy school during operating hours of the business.
- (2) The department and its agents and employees shall not request or be granted permission to enter a room of a massage therapy establishment or massage therapy school in which a client is receiving treatment from a licensee under this chapter.
- (c) The department may hold licensing examinations from time to time at a place or places as the department may designate.
- (d) (1) The department may require each original applicant enrolling in a massage therapy school, postsecondary massage therapy school, or massage therapy apprenticeship

program, or applying as a new massage therapy licensee to practice in the State of Arkansas and each upgrade applicant for a license issued by the department to apply to the Identification Bureau of the Division of Arkansas State Police for a state and federal criminal background check to be conducted by the Identification Bureau of the Division of Arkansas State Police and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

(2) The state and federal criminal background check shall conform to applicable federal standards and shall include the taking of fingerprints.

(3) The applicant shall sign a release of information to the department and shall be responsible for the payment of any fees associated with the state and federal criminal background check.

(4) (A) Each applicant who has resided outside of Arkansas shall provide a state and federal criminal background check, including the taking of fingerprints, issued by the state or states in which the applicant resided.

(B) Results shall be sent directly to the department from the agency performing the state and federal criminal background check.

(e) For purposes of this section, the board shall follow the licensing restrictions based on criminal records under § 17-3-102.

17-86-204. Records

(a) (1) The Department of Health shall maintain a record book and computer file in which will be entered the names and addresses of all persons and entities to whom licenses or registrations have been granted under this chapter, the license or registration number, and the dates of granting such licenses, registrations, and renewals thereof, and other matters of record.

(2) The department will move to a separate book and file the records of all persons who have died, have let their licenses lapse for three (3) years, whose licenses have been suspended or revoked by the department, or cancelled by the licensee.

(b) (1) The record books and computer files so provided and maintained shall be deemed and considered a book of records and files of records, and they will be kept in a timely manner.

(2) A transcript of any record therein or a license or registration number or date of granting such a license or registration to a person charged with a violation of any of the provisions of this chapter shall be admitted as evidence in any of the courts of this state if certified by the department.

(c) (1) The original books, records, and papers of the department shall be maintained at the offices of the department.

(2) A school that closes shall immediately submit all student transcripts to the department office.

(d) Copies of records may be furnished to any person requesting them upon payment of such copying fee as the department may require and as Arkansas state laws and rules permit. However, licensing exams shall be exempt from the Freedom of Information Act of 1967, § 25-19-101 et seq.

17-86-205. Disposition of funds

- (a) (1) All moneys remitted to the Department of Health under this chapter shall be made payable to the Department of Health.

(2) The Department of Health shall deposit all such funds received in a timely manner in accordance with laws of the State of Arkansas and rules of the Department of Finance and Administration.
- (b) (1) All moneys received under this chapter shall be paid into the State Treasury and shall be credited to the Public Health Fund for the general uses of the Department of Health.

(2) Salaries and other expenses necessarily incurred in carrying into effect the provisions of this chapter and other programs administered by the Department of Health shall be paid from the moneys received.

17-86-301. Registration required--Exemptions

- (a) It shall be unlawful:
 - (1) For any person who does not hold a valid massage therapy license to use the following titles: massage therapist, massage practitioner, myotherapist, massotherapist, massage technologist, masseur, masseuse, therapy technologist, master massage therapist, massage therapy instructor, or any derivation of those titles or to advertise such titles;
 - (2) For any person who does not hold the applicable massage therapy license issued by the Department of Health to engage professionally for payment, barter, donation, or exchange in the practice or instruction of massage therapy as defined in this chapter;
 - (3) For any person to operate or conduct any massage therapy establishment or massage therapy school which does not conform to the sanitary rules contained in § 17-86-302, in state law, in local ordinances, or in those rules which may be adopted by the State Board of Health;
 - (4) To employ any person to practice in a massage therapy establishment or instruct under this chapter who does not hold a valid license issued by the department;
 - (5) For any person to operate a massage therapy school or massage therapy clinic without its first being registered under the provisions of this chapter as a licensed massage therapy school or registered as a massage therapy establishment;
 - (6) For any massage therapy school or postsecondary massage therapy school to enroll any person in the massage therapy school or postsecondary school who does not hold a massage therapy learning permit issued by the department;
 - (7) For any massage therapy apprenticeship program to enroll any person in the massage therapy apprenticeship program who does not hold a massage therapy learning permit issued by the department; or
 - (8)
 - (A) For the department or other individual or entity to incorporate privileges or certification requirements of any private organization, private professional

association, or private accrediting agency within Arkansas massage laws or its rules.

- (B) However, the department may adopt as its licensure exam an exam drafted and administered by a private organization, private professional association, or private accreditation agency.

(b) Exemptions:

(1) Persons authorized by the laws of this state to practice medicine, osteopathy, podiatry, or physical therapy, and licensed physicians' assistants, licensed nurses, licensed physical therapy assistants, licensed acupuncturists, licensed midwives, and chiropractors are exempt from this chapter in so far as massage therapy practices are offered or instructed within the scope and under the provisions of licensure;

(2) Persons licensed as a massage therapy student who practice under the direct supervision of a massage therapy instructor at a licensed massage therapy school or licensed postsecondary massage therapy school for a period not to exceed six (6) months from the date of graduation from the massage therapy school;

(3) Persons licensed as a massage therapy apprentice who practice under the direct supervision of a massage therapy instructor who is registered or approved as a sponsor as part of the massage therapy apprenticeship program approval by the United States Office of Apprenticeship, for a period not to exceed six (6) months from the date of completion of the massage therapy apprenticeship program;

(4) Persons authorized by the department to present and instruct department-approved school curriculum or continuing education programs, or both, may present and instruct such department-approved curriculum and programs for payment and in the presentation and instruction may utilize practices defined in, but without being licensed or registered under, the provisions of this chapter; and

(5) The practice of massage therapy that is incidental to a program of study by students enrolled in a licensed massage therapy school approved by the department, and under direct supervision of a licensee employed as an instructor at the school, is exempt from § 17-86-311(a)(10).

- (c) (1) A licensee or registration holder shall notify the department in writing of any change of name, address, phone number, or place of employment.

(2) If a name change is requested, a new license or registration shall be issued in the new name at the next renewal date or immediately for a fee not to exceed twenty dollars (\$20.00) for printing of a new license.

(3) Valid government-issued photo identification is required for each name change request.

17-86-302. Sanitary requirements

(a) It shall be unlawful for any person or school to be licensed or any establishment to be operated under the provisions of this chapter unless the following requirements are met and practiced:

- (1) A sink for hand washing with hot and cold running water and soap must be accessible;

- (2) A restroom must be accessible;
- (3) A towel or sheet that has been used by one (1) client may not be used on another person unless the towel or sheet has been relaundered;
- (4) Anyone who has any infectious, contagious, or communicable disease which may be spread by airborne, droplet, contact, or indirect methods and who is in contact with the public must not practice until all risk of disease transmission is cleared. Any employee with such a disease must be immediately relieved from duty until all risk of disease transmission is cleared;
- (5) A school or clinic must be equipped with a massage table or tables or a massage chair or chairs or equipped with such standard equipment dictated by the practice engaged in as defined in § 17-86-102; and
- (6) A clinic or school must comply with all requirements of the Department of Health, city ordinances, and state laws.

(b) Failure to comply with any of the requirements as set forth by this section will be grounds for suspension or revocation of license.

17-86-303. Massage therapist

(a) For an applicant seeking enrollment in a massage therapy school or massage therapy apprenticeship program on or after January 1, 2024, in order to be issued a massage therapy learning permit, the applicant seeking enrollment in a massage therapy school or massage therapy apprenticeship program shall:

- (1) Furnish to the Department of Health satisfactory proof that the applicant is eighteen (18) years of age or older;
- (2) Make oath that the applicant has not been convicted of, found guilty of, or entered a plea of guilty or nolo contendere to any offense that would constitute a felony listed under § 17-3-102 or constitute the offense of prostitution, either in this state or another state, and submit a signed authorization to investigate and have information released to the department;
- (3) Provide a state and federal criminal background check to the department as provided in § 17-86-104;
- (4) Present the following issued in the same name as the applicant or licensee:
 - (A) A valid photo identification card or driver's license, or both; and
 - (B) A Social Security card;
- (5) Request the massage therapy school or massage therapy apprenticeship program in which the applicant is seeking to enroll or has enrolled to send a copy of the enrollment contract, or equivalent confirmation of enrollment to the department; and
- (6) Pay the specified fees as provided in subsection (d) of this section, which shall accompany a completed notarized application to the department.

(b) For an applicant who was issued a massage therapy learning permit on or after January 1, 2024, an applicant holding a massage therapy learning permit under subsection (a) of this

section, upon graduating from a massage therapy school or completing a massage therapy apprenticeship program, shall:

(1) Request that the massage therapy school or massage therapy apprenticeship program submit directly to the department either:

- (A)** A transcript and credentials issued by a massage therapy school; or
- (B)** A certificate of completion issued by a massage therapy apprenticeship program;

(2) Furnish to the department satisfactory proof of passing an examination recognized and approved by the department;

(3) Make oath that the applicant has not been convicted of, found guilty of, or entered a plea of guilty or nolo contendere to any offense that would constitute a felony listed under § 17-3-102 or constitute the offense of prostitution, either in this state or another state, since the date the massage therapy learning permit was issued, and submit a signed authorization to investigate and have information released to the department;

(4) Submit a completed application provided by the department for issuance of licensure; and

(5) Pay the specified fees as provided in subsection (d) of this section.

(c) In order to be licensed as a massage therapist, the person seeking licensure under § 17-86-308 or subsection (g) of this section or through similar reciprocity provisions as provided by the rules established by the department shall:

(1) Furnish to the department satisfactory proof that the applicant is eighteen (18) years of age or older;

(2) Make oath that the applicant has not been convicted of, found guilty of, or entered a plea of guilty or nolo contendere to any offense that would constitute a felony listed under § 17-3-102 or constitute the offense of prostitution, either in this state or another state, and submit a signed authorization to investigate and have information released to the department;

(3) Provide a state and federal criminal background check to the department as provided in § 17-86-104;

(4) Present the following issued in the same name as the applicant or licensee:

- (A)** A valid photo identification card or driver's license, or both; and
- (B)** A Social Security card;

(5)

(A) Present a high school diploma, high school equivalency diploma approved by the Adult Education Section, or college transcript and credentials issued by a massage therapy school accepted by the department or an equivalent institution with no less than five hundred (500) hours of in-classroom instruction.

(B) An applicant shall not submit his or her transcript directly to the department.

(C) An applicant shall request that the massage therapy school submit the transcript directly to the department.

(D)

(i) If the applicant's transcript is not obtainable from the original school, the applicant shall submit a statement to explain why the transcript can not be obtained.

(ii) Other documentation of credentials may be submitted and accepted for licensure at the discretion of the department;

(6) Furnish to the department satisfactory proof of passing an examination recognized and approved by the department; and

(7) Pay the specified fees as provided in subsection (d) of this section, which shall accompany a completed notarized application to the department.

(d) Fees are as follows:

(1) Massage therapy learning permit application fee..... \$75.00
Nonrefundable under subsection (a) of this section

(2) Reciprocity license application fee..... \$75.00
Nonrefundable under subsection (c) of this section

(3) Original license fee..... \$80.00
under subsection (b) of this section or by reciprocity under subsection (c) of this section

(4) Biennial renewal..... \$80.00

(5) Examination fee or reexamination fee..... \$25.00

(6) Duplicate license fee..... \$10.00

(7) Pocket card fee not to exceed ten dollars..... (\$10.00).

(e) A person shall not practice massage therapy unless he or she holds a valid massage therapy learning permit by the department or until his or her official license has been received from the department.

(f) A person who attempts to procure or does procure a license in violation of this section shall be subject to the penalties provided for in § 17-86-103.

(g) A person who was enrolled in a massage therapy school, postsecondary massage therapy school, or massage therapy apprenticeship program as of January 1, 2024, or has completed or graduated from a massage therapy school, postsecondary massage therapy school, or massage therapy apprenticeship program before January 1, 2024, may seek licensure as provided in subsection (c) of this section.

17-86-304. Master massage therapist

(a) A person who holds a license as a massage therapist issued by the Department of Health and who submits satisfactory evidence to the department that he or she has completed and meets the requirements stated in § 17-86-102 is entitled to be upgraded to master massage therapist.

(b) Each application for upgrade to master massage therapist shall be considered a new application for purposes of criminal background checks.

(c) Fees are as follows:

- (1) Application fee..... \$75.00 Nonrefundable
- (2) Original license fee..... \$80.00
- (3) Biennial renewal fee..... \$80.00
- (4) Duplicate license fee.....\$10.00
- (5) Pocket card fee not to exceed ten dollars..... (\$10.00).

17-86-305. Massage therapy instructor

(a) A person who holds a license as a master massage therapist issued by the Department of Health and who submits satisfactory evidence to the department that he or she has successfully completed and meets the requirements stated in § 17-86-102 shall be entitled to be upgraded to massage therapy instructor.

(b) Each application for upgrade to massage therapy instructor is considered a new application for purposes of criminal background checks.

(c) Fees are as follows:

- (1) Application fee..... \$75.00 Nonrefundable
- (2) Original license fee..... \$80.00
- (3) Biennial renewal fee..... \$80.00
- (4) Duplicate license fee..... \$10.00
- (5) Pocket card fee not to exceed ten dollars..... (\$10.00).

17-86-306. Massage therapy school

(a) A person shall not establish, operate, or maintain a massage therapy school without first having obtained a certificate of massage therapy school licensure issued by the Department of Health.

(b) A massage therapy school shall not be approved by the department or granted a certificate of licensure until the appropriate application and inspection forms as prescribed by the department have been completed and approved and the licensure fee has been paid.

(c) (1) Inspection of the school premises shall be made by the department, to include without limitation proof of required forms completed and returned to the department with approval or recommendations.

(2) Should the school facilities not pass the first inspection and, after recommendations, failures are corrected, a second inspection will be made within thirty (30) days to determine the school's eligibility.

(d) (1) A school shall require a physical examination by a medical doctor documenting that the student poses no health risk to give and receive massage.

(2) The school shall be required to maintain proof of the examination and furnish additional information and documents as may be required by the department or its appointee during the inspection.

(e) The department may certify the school and provide for licensure thereof if the school follows a curriculum consisting of not fewer than five hundred (500) hours of in-classroom instruction over a term of not fewer than four (4) months consisting of the following subjects:

(1) One hundred seventy-five (175) hours of anatomy, physiology, pathology, and contraindications to massage therapy;

(2) Two hundred twenty-five (225) hours of technique;

(3) Twenty-five (25) hours of hydrotherapy, electrotherapy, and heliotherapy;

(4) Twenty-five (25) hours of hygiene and infection control;

(5) Twenty-five (25) hours of massage therapy law, business management, and professional ethics; and

(6) Twenty-five (25) hours of related subjects as approved by the department.

(f) (1) The fee for establishing a school shall not exceed one thousand dollars (\$1,000).

(2) The initial inspection fee for each school shall not exceed one hundred dollars (\$100).

(3) The annual renewal and inspection fee for each school shall not exceed one hundred dollars (\$100).

(g) The curriculum established in subsection (e) of this section shall be followed for all massage therapy programs.

(h) (1) The State Board of Health shall promulgate rules setting a standard educational curriculum for schools of massage.

(2) The standard educational curriculum shall distinguish between secondary and postsecondary educational requirements for the schools of massage.

17-86-307. Massage therapy establishment.

(a)

(1) A person or entity shall not establish, maintain, or operate a massage therapy establishment unless the person or entity is registered with the Department of Health.

(2) To open a massage therapy establishment, each principal of a massage therapy establishment shall submit to the department the following:

(A) A completed registration application as furnished by the department;

(B)

(i) A list of all principals, and each principal's massage therapy license number, if applicable;

(ii) If requested by the department, the applicant or massage therapy establishment registration holder shall provide any requested documentation to support each principal's interest in the entity;

- (C) A list of all licensed massage therapists performing services in the massage therapy establishment;
 - (D) A certificate of good standing from the Secretary of State, if applicable; and
 - (E) A copy of a business license from a city or municipality, if applicable.
- (3) Each massage therapy establishment registration issued under this chapter shall be valid for two (2) years from the date of issuance.
- (4) Any massage therapy establishment registered and in good standing with the department on August 5, 2025, shall have ninety (90) days to submit all required documentation to the department as provided in this section.
- (5) The massage therapy establishment registration is not transferable.

(b) If any information or documentation provided by the massage therapy establishment under subsection (a) of this section changes after initial registration, the massage therapy establishment shall update the department within ten (10) business days of the change.

(c) The annual inspection fee for each clinic and spa shall not exceed seventy-five dollars (\$75.00).

17-86-308. Reciprocity

- (a) (1) The Department of Health may enter into reciprocal relations with other states and territories whose licensure requirements are substantially the same as those provided in this chapter.
- (2) (A) If the applicant's transcript or a copy of the applicant's transcript is not obtainable from the original school, the applicant shall submit a statement to explain why it may not be obtained.
- (B) Other documentation of credentials may be submitted and accepted for licensure at the discretion of the department.
- (b) (1) An out-of-state applicant holding a current massage therapy license issued by another state and after receiving an Arkansas massage therapy license may apply for an upgrade to master massage therapist or massage therapy instructor by providing appropriate continuing education credits and experience gained before Arkansas licensure for department approval.
- (2) An upgrade request shall be made by submitting a complete application package and paying the fees required by this chapter.

17-86-309. Renewals--Inactive list--Continuing education

- (a) (1) (A) A license issued under this chapter is valid for two (2) years and expires on the licensee's birthday.
- (B) (i) If a license issued under this chapter is not renewed by the first day of the month preceding the birthdate of the licensee in the biennial renewal year, the license expires.
- (ii) (a) If a license expires under subdivision (a)(1)(B)(i) of this section, the applicant shall submit a new application that requires the applicant to meet current requirements and successfully complete an examination recognized by the Department of Health.
- (b) The department shall issue a license effective as of the date of receipt of the late application and all new applicant fees.
- (c) An individual licensee who is not currently in practice and who wishes to place his or her license on the inactive list may remain on

the inactive list for not more than four (4) years without reexamination.

(2) Each license for a massage therapy school is valid for a period of one (1) year and expires on June 30 of each year, whereupon a renewal license may be issued upon submission of a completed license renewal application with payment of the fee or fees prescribed for class of certification.

(3) Every license for licensees, both active and inactive, shall expire on the birthdate of the licensee in the biennial renewal year.

(4) Each renewal for licensees shall be accompanied by proof of no fewer than eighteen (18) hours of continuing education that have been approved by the department.

(b) A renewal application for a licensee is due on or before the first day of the month preceding the month of the birthdate of the licensee in the biennial renewal year.

(c) A renewal application for a licensee postmarked after the first day of the month preceding the month of the birthdate of the licensee of the biennial renewal year shall be levied a late penalty fee not to exceed twenty-five dollars (\$25.00).

(d) **(1)** An application for renewal postmarked after the birthdate of the licensee in the biennial renewal year will be treated as an application to renew an expired license.

(2) **(A)** A license is expired if the application is postmarked after the birthdate of the licensee in the biennial renewal year.

(B) Before the department issues a new license to an applicant whose license has expired under subdivision (d)(2)(A) of this section, the applicant shall:

(i) Submit a new application that requires the applicant to meet current requirements; and

(ii) Successfully complete an examination recognized by the department.

(e) The department shall issue a license effective as of the date of receipt of the late application and all renewal fees, penalties, and required documentation.

(f) **(1)** Any individual licensee who is not currently in practice and who wishes to place his or her license on the inactive list may remain on this list for a period not to exceed four (4) years without reexamination.

(2) After the time allowed under subdivision (f)(1) of this section, all inactive licensees shall meet current requirements for licensure and must successfully complete an examination recognized by the department before resuming the active practice of massage therapy.

(g) Any individual licensee who has been placed on the inactive list for fewer than four (4) years and who wishes to reactivate his or her license shall follow the procedures for license renewal as provided for in this section, present satisfactory evidence of completion of continuing education hours as required by subsection (a) of this section for the inactive period, and pay all appropriate fees before resuming the active practice of massage therapy.

(h) The fee for placement on the inactive list shall not exceed eighty dollars (\$80.00) per biennium.

- (i) (1) A licensee whose massage therapy school license renewal is postmarked after April 30 of each year shall pay a late fee not to exceed five hundred dollars (\$500).
- (2) A massage therapy school license renewal postmarked after June 30 of each year automatically expires.
- (3) A licensee whose massage therapy school license has expired shall submit a new application to the department with current requirements and fees.
- (j) (1) Each application for continuing education programs shall be accompanied by an application fee not to exceed forty dollars (\$40.00).
- (2) (A) A licensee holding a valid Arkansas massage therapy license may request department approval of appropriate continuing education courses otherwise not approved by the department.
- (B) Courses shall meet similar standards as courses approved by the department.
- (C) Proof of residency shall accompany the request.

17-86-310. Display of license

- (a) (1) An official massage therapy license shall be conspicuously and publicly displayed in the place where the holder engages in the practice of massage therapy or instruction of massage therapy.
- (2) An official massage therapy school license shall be conspicuously displayed in the massage therapy school.
- (3) An official massage therapy establishment registration shall be conspicuously displayed in the massage therapy establishment.
- (b) It is unlawful to tamper with or reduce in size an original massage therapy license or registration issued by the Department of Health.
- (c) Each license or registration shall provide the correct address of the department.

17-86-311. Disciplinary actions and penalties

- (a) The Massage Therapy Technical Advisory Committee may deny, suspend, place on probation, or revoke a license or registration upon any one (1) of the following grounds:
 - (1) A felony listed under § 17-3-102 or the offense of prostitution, either in this state or another state;
 - (2) Malpractice or gross incompetency;
 - (3) The use in advertisements of untruthful or improbable statements or flamboyant, exaggerated, or extravagant claims concerning the licensee's professional excellence or abilities;
 - (4) Habitual drunkenness or habitual use of any illegal drugs;
 - (5) Serving alcoholic beverages at the clinic or school in a room where massage therapy is being performed or in a massage therapy school;

(6) Unprofessional conduct;

(7) Failure to comply with the Department of Health's Massage Therapy Code of Ethics or any valid rule or order of the department;

(8) Invasion of the field of practice of any profession for which a license is required, the diagnosis of ailments, diseases, or injuries of human beings, the performance of osseous adjustments, prescription of medications, or other breaches of the scope of practice of massage therapy;

(9) Failure of any licensee or registration holder to comply with this chapter; or

(10) Failure to have licensed personnel to perform massage therapy techniques in his or her establishment or school.

(11) Employing, contracting, or allowing an individual who does not hold a current massage therapy license or massage therapy learning permit to perform massage therapy techniques in the licensee's massage therapy establishment or massage therapy school; or

(12) Operating an establishment without a massage therapy establishment registration.

(b) **(1)** The State Board of Health shall establish by rule the penalty system to be imposed under this section.

(2) Whenever the committee finds that the holder of a license, certificate of registration, or other permit issued by the department is guilty of a violation of the rules of the department or the laws of the state pertaining to any occupation, profession, or business licensed or regulated by the department, the committee may impose a penalty on the licensee, registration holder, or permit holder in lieu of suspension or revocation of license, certificate of registration, or other permit.

(3) **(A)** Upon imposition of a penalty in lieu of suspension or revocation of license, certificate of registration, or other permit, the committee may require that the licensee or permit holder pay a penalty to the department.

(B) The license, certificate of registration, or permit shall be suspended until the penalty is paid.

(4) **(A)** The penalty may be imposed in lieu of revocation or suspension of a license, certificate, or other permit only if the committee formally finds that the public health, safety, welfare, and morals would not be impaired and that the payment of the penalty will achieve the desired disciplinary results.

(B) The minimum penalty imposed by the committee in lieu of revocation or suspension of a license, certificate, or other permit shall be twenty-five dollars (\$25.00) and the maximum penalty one thousand dollars (\$1,000) per infraction.

(C) The authority of the committee to impose penalties under this section is not affected by any other civil or criminal proceeding concerning the same violation.

(D) A person penalized by the committee under this chapter may appeal any order of the committee in the manner currently provided by law.

(E) In addition to any other sanctions authorized by this chapter, the committee may impose a civil penalty as provided in this subsection against any unlicensed person, firm, or corporation practicing or offering to practice any actions requiring licensure under this chapter.

- (c) (1) The massage therapist-patient relationship is founded on mutual trust. Sexual misconduct is prohibited.
- (2) The committee shall revoke the license of a person who engages in the practice of massage of the breasts unless the massage therapist:
- (A) Engages in the practice of massage of the breasts for therapeutic and medical purposes including without limitation the reduction of scar tissue following a surgery on the breast, release of myofascial binding, or improving lymphatic flow; and
 - (B) Has received at least forty-eight (48) hours of continuing education credits in lymphatic massage, myofascial massage, or oncology massage.
- (3) A revocation of a license or registration under subdivisions (c)(1) and (2) of this section shall be for a period of at least three (3) years and any application for reinstatement of a license shall be reviewed for approval by the Massage Therapy Technical Advisory Committee..
- (d) (1) Charges may be brought by any person.
- (2) Any accusation of any of the offenses enumerated in this section may be filed with the committee. The accusations shall be in writing, signed by the accuser, and verified under oath.
- (e) In denying, suspending, or revoking any license or registration, the committee shall afford any party review as provided for in the Arkansas Administrative Procedure Act, § 25-15-201 et seq., and as otherwise provided by the rules of the State Board of Health.

17-86-312. Fees

(a) All registration fees and other fees due the Department of Health shall be paid in accordance with the provisions of this chapter and all other laws and rules of this state.

- (b) (1) The initial inspection fee for a massage therapy school shall not exceed one hundred dollars (\$100).
- (2) The annual renewal and inspection fee for a massage therapy school shall not exceed one hundred dollars (\$100).
- (3) A licensee whose massage therapy school license renewal is postmarked after April 30 of each year shall pay a late fee not to exceed five hundred dollars (\$500).

17-86-314. Active military duty licensure

(a) If a licensee fails to renew timely his or her license because the licensee is or was on active duty with the United States Armed Forces or on state active duty with the Arkansas National Guard, the licensee may renew the license by:

- (1) Requesting renewal of the license before or after the expiration by:
- (A) The licensee;
 - (B) The licensee's spouse; or
 - (C) (i) The licensee's power of authority.
(ii) A copy of the power of authority documentation shall be filed with the renewal form if the power of authority requests the renewal;

- (2)** Completing the appropriate renewal form, including the current address and telephone number for the individual requesting the renewal; and
- (3)** Filing with the renewal form a copy of the official orders or other official military documentation showing that the licensee is or was on active duty.

(b) A licensee renewing under this section shall pay the applicable renewal fee under § 17-86-309 but shall not pay a late renewal fee.