



Arkansas

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Arkansas regulates massage, has a broad definition of massage therapy that includes vague language saying that it includes “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.” Structural Integration is not exempted by name. Although the statute allows for broad discretion in which exams may be allowed, the rules appear to limit the choices to the MBLEx and a state exam, but there is room for interpretation that could allow for the CESI under the current rules, or the opportunity to petition for the Rules to allow for the CESI.

Law and Regulation

Statute: AR Code Title 17, Subtitle 3, Chapter 86

<http://www.healthy.arkansas.gov/programsServices/hsLicensingRegulation/MassageTherapy/Documents/MassageTherapyLaw.pdf>

17-86-102. Definitions

3) (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 health care 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; and

(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;*

Re: Examination, the statute says:

17-86-301. Registration required—Exemptions

(5) ...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.

17-86-303. Massage therapist

(a) In order to be licensed as a massage therapist, the person seeking licensure shall:

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

Administrative Rules: <http://www.healthy.arkansas.gov/aboutADH/RulesRegs/MTB.pdf>

Article 1

1. Terms found in Arkansas Code §17-86-102 are descriptive rather than limiting, and massage therapy includes those techniques which are utilized in all phases of massage and bodywork for the purposes of relaxation, stress reduction, pain relief, injury prevention, injury repair, postural improvement and/or health enhancement.

Examinations

Article Four

1. The Board may administer an examination of its own preparation as the State licensing examination for Arkansas massage therapists.

2. The Board may accept the Federation of State Massage Therapy Board Massage and Bodywork Licensing Exam (MBLEx) in lieu of the State licensing examination provided that the applicant passes a Board examination that verifies their knowledge of the Massage Therapy Act and of these rules and regulations that govern the practice of massage therapy in the State.

3. In the instance of multiple exams, the Board reserves the right to choose specific exams.

Professional Oversight

October 1, 2015, a new massage therapy law went into effect in Arkansas. It turned authority over to the State Board of Health and created an advisory committee under the BOH.

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

(4) The State Board of Health shall promulgate by rule the duties and powers of the committee.

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.

Advisory Committee and Meetings

<http://www.healthy.arkansas.gov/programsServices/hsLicensingRegulation/MassageTherapy/Pages/Committee.aspx>