

Minnesota Natural Health Legal Reform Project
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In Opposition to HF 644, Massage and Bodywork Registration

We are writing in opposition to HF 644, Massage Therapy and Bodywork Registration because currently the right to practice for massage and bodywork therapist is well protected under current law and that law is working very well. To add a new statute calling for their registration, as HF 644 does, adds an unnecessary layer of regulation that undermines the simplicity of our existing law.

In the late 1990s, the Minnesota Natural Health Legal Reform Project worked with legislators in and outside of hearings to craft what became the Complementary and Alternative Freedom of Practice Act, passed overwhelmingly in spring of 1990 and signed into law by Gov. Jesse Ventura. It protected the right to practice for a broad range of unlicensed health care practitioners, not endorsing any of them, but creating a framework under which they could practice without fear of being charged with “practice of medicine without a license.” It was a freedom approach, not a licensure approach or even a registration. At the legislature’s insistence, there were some consumer protection features – ethical rules and guidelines, and also requirements for disclosure of the practitioner’s educational background and qualifications. The law also created an office within the department of health to investigate consumer complaints and, if deemed necessary, take disciplinary measures.

Over these past 14 years, this “freedom of access” approach of Chapter 146A has worked well. There *have* been some complaints filed with the health department’s office, there *have* been complaints and occasional disciplinary steps taken, and the process has worked well. We do not want to undermine this successful “health freedom of access” model of regulation for the unlicensed practitioner by bringing on a whole new layer of regulation for massage workers and bodyworkers that would create more bureaucracy, the likely elimination of some practitioners in some locations, and undermine the simplicity of what is already working well under current law. **Please support current law and vote No on HF 644.** Thank you.

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