

CHAPTER 2021-143

House Bill No. 245

An act relating to massage therapy; renaming ch. 480, F.S., as “Massage Therapy Practice”; amending s. 480.031, F.S.; conforming a provision to changes made by the act; amending s. 480.032, F.S.; revising the purpose of ch. 480, F.S.; amending s. 480.033, F.S.; revising and providing definitions; amending ss. 477.013, 477.0135, 477.0265, 480.034, 480.035, 480.041, 480.043, 480.046, 480.0465, 480.047, 480.052, 480.0535, 627.6407, 627.6619, 627.736, 641.31, and 823.05, F.S.; conforming provisions to changes made by the act; making technical changes; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Chapter 480, Florida Statutes, entitled “Massage Practice,” is renamed “Massage Therapy Practice.”

Section 2. Section 480.031, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

480.031 Short title.—~~This act shall be known and~~ may be cited as the “Massage Therapy Practice Act.”

Section 3. Section 480.032, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

480.032 Purpose.—The Legislature recognizes that the practice of massage therapy is potentially dangerous to the public in that massage therapists must have a knowledge of anatomy and physiology and an understanding of the relationship between the structure and the function of the tissues being treated and the total function of the body. Massage therapy is a therapeutic health care practice, and regulations are necessary to protect the public from unqualified practitioners. It is therefore deemed necessary in the interest of public health, safety, and welfare to regulate the practice of massage therapy in the ~~this~~ state; however, restrictions shall be imposed to the extent necessary to protect the public from significant and discernible danger to health and yet not in such a manner which will unreasonably affect the competitive market. Further, consumer protection for both health and economic matters shall be afforded the public through legal remedies provided for in this act.

Section 4. Section 480.033, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

480.033 Definitions.—As used in this act:

~~(1)(5)~~ “Apprentice” means a person approved by the board to study colonic irrigation under the instruction of a licensed massage therapist practicing colonic irrigation.

~~(2)(1)~~ “Board” means the Board of Massage Therapy.

(3)(9) “Board-approved massage therapy school” means a facility that meets minimum standards for training and curriculum as determined by rule of the board and that is licensed by the Department of Education pursuant to chapter 1005 or the equivalent licensing authority of another state or is within the public school system of this state or a college or university that is eligible to participate in the William L. Boyd, IV, Effective Access to Student Education Grant Program.

(4)(6) “Colonic irrigation” means a method of hydrotherapy used to cleanse the colon with the aid of a mechanical device and water.

(5)(2) “Department” means the Department of Health.

(6)(11) “Designated establishment manager” means a massage therapist who holds a clear and active license without restriction, who is responsible for the operation of a massage establishment in accordance with the provisions of this chapter, and who is designated the manager by the rules or practices at the establishment.

(7) “Establishment” or “massage establishment” means a site or premises, or portion thereof, wherein a massage therapist practices massage therapy.

(8)(10) “Establishment owner” means a person who has ownership interest in a massage establishment. The term includes an individual who holds a massage establishment license, a general partner of a partnership, an owner or officer of a corporation, and a member of a limited liability company and its subsidiaries who holds a massage establishment license.

(9)(8) “Licensure” means the procedure by which a person, hereinafter referred to as a “practitioner,” applies to the board for approval to practice massage or to operate an establishment.

(10)(4) “Massage therapist” means a person licensed as required by this act, who performs administers massage therapy, including massage therapy assessment, for compensation.

(11)(3) “Massage therapy” means the manipulation of the soft tissues of the human body with the hand, foot, knee, arm, or elbow, regardless of whether or not such manipulation is aided by hydrotherapy, including colonic irrigation, or thermal therapy; any electrical or mechanical device; or the application to the human body of a chemical or herbal preparation.

(12) “Massage therapy assessment” means the determination of the course of massage therapy treatment.

Section 5. Subsection (13) of section 477.013, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

477.013 Definitions.—As used in this chapter:

(13) “Skin care services” means the treatment of the skin of the body, other than the head, face, and scalp, by the use of a sponge, brush, cloth, or similar device to apply or remove a chemical preparation or other substance, except that chemical peels may be removed by peeling an applied preparation from the skin by hand. Skin care services must be performed by a licensed cosmetologist or facial specialist within a licensed cosmetology or specialty salon, and such services may not involve massage therapy, as defined in s. 480.033 ~~s. 480.033(3)~~, through manipulation of the superficial tissue.

Section 6. Paragraph (a) of subsection (1) of section 477.0135, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

477.0135 Exemptions.—

(1) This chapter does not apply to the following persons when practicing pursuant to their professional or occupational responsibilities and duties:

(a) Persons authorized under the laws of this state to practice medicine, surgery, osteopathic medicine, chiropractic medicine, massage therapy, naturopathy, or podiatric medicine.

Section 7. Paragraph (f) of subsection (1) of section 477.0265, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

477.0265 Prohibited acts.—

(1) It is unlawful for any person to:

(f) Advertise or imply that skin care services, as performed under this chapter, have any relationship to the practice of massage therapy as defined in s. 480.033 ~~s. 480.033(3)~~, except those practices or activities defined in s. 477.013.

Section 8. Subsection (4) of section 480.034, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

480.034 Exemptions.—

(4) An exemption granted is effective to the extent that an exempted person’s practice or profession overlaps with the practice of massage therapy.

Section 9. Subsection (2) of section 480.035, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

480.035 Board of Massage Therapy.—

(2) Five members of the board shall be licensed massage therapists and shall have been engaged in the practice of massage therapy for not less than 5 consecutive years prior to the date of appointment to the board. The Governor shall appoint each member for a term of 4 years. Two members of

the board shall be laypersons. Each board member shall be a high school graduate or shall have received a high school equivalency diploma. Each board member shall be a citizen of the United States and a resident of this state for not less than 5 years. The appointments are ~~will be~~ subject to confirmation by the Senate.

Section 10. Subsections (1) and (4) and paragraph (b) of subsection (5) of section 480.041, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

480.041 Massage therapists; qualifications; licensure; endorsement.—

(1) Any person is qualified for licensure as a massage therapist under this act who:

(a) Is at least 18 years of age or has received a high school diploma or high school equivalency diploma;

(b) Has completed a course of study at a board-approved massage therapy school that meets standards adopted by the board; and

(c) Has received a passing grade on a national examination designated by the board.

(4) Upon an applicant's passing the examination and paying the initial licensure fee, the department shall issue to the applicant a license, valid until the next scheduled renewal date, to practice massage therapy.

(5) The board shall adopt rules:

(b) Providing for educational standards, examination, and certification for the practice of colonic irrigation, as defined in s. 480.033 ~~s. 480.033(6)~~, by massage therapists.

Section 11. Subsection (14) of section 480.043, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

480.043 Massage establishments; requisites; licensure; inspection; human trafficking awareness training and policies.—

(14) Except for the requirements of subsection (13), this section does not apply to a physician licensed under chapter 457, chapter 458, chapter 459, or chapter 460 who employs a licensed massage therapist to perform massage therapy on the physician's patients at the physician's place of practice. This subsection does not restrict investigations by the department for violations of chapter 456 or this chapter.

Section 12. Paragraphs (a), (b), (c), (f), (g), (h), (i), and (o) of subsection (1) of section 480.046, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

480.046 Grounds for disciplinary action by the board.—

(1) The following acts constitute grounds for denial of a license or disciplinary action, as specified in s. 456.072(2):

(a) Attempting to procure a license to practice massage therapy by bribery or fraudulent misrepresentation.

(b) Having a license to practice massage therapy revoked, suspended, or otherwise acted against, including the denial of licensure, by the licensing authority of another state, territory, or country.

(c) Being convicted or found guilty, regardless of adjudication, of a crime in any jurisdiction which directly relates to the practice of massage therapy or to the ability to practice massage therapy. Any plea of nolo contendere shall be considered a conviction for purposes of this chapter.

(f) Aiding, assisting, procuring, or advising any unlicensed person to practice massage therapy contrary to ~~the provisions of this chapter~~ or to a rule of the department or the board.

(g) Making deceptive, untrue, or fraudulent representations in the practice of massage therapy.

(h) Being unable to practice massage therapy with reasonable skill and safety by reason of illness or use of alcohol, drugs, narcotics, chemicals, or any other type of material or as a result of any mental or physical condition. In enforcing this paragraph, the department shall have, upon probable cause, may authority to compel a massage therapist to submit to a mental or physical examination by physicians designated by the department. Failure of a massage therapist to submit to such examination when so directed, unless the failure was due to circumstances beyond her or his control, constitutes ~~shall constitute~~ an admission of the allegations against her or him, consequent upon which a default and final order may be entered without the taking of testimony or presentation of evidence. A massage therapist affected under this paragraph shall at reasonable intervals be afforded an opportunity to demonstrate that she or he can resume the competent practice of massage therapy with reasonable skill and safety to clients.

(i) Gross or repeated malpractice or the failure to practice massage therapy with that level of care, skill, and treatment which is recognized by a reasonably prudent massage therapist as being acceptable under similar conditions and circumstances.

(o) Practicing massage therapy at a site, location, or place which is not duly licensed as a massage establishment, except that a massage therapist, as provided by ~~rules adopted by the board~~ rule, may provide massage therapy services, excluding colonic irrigation, at the residence of a client, at the office of the client, at a sports event, at a convention, or at a trade show.

Section 13. Section 480.0465, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

480.0465 Advertisement.—Each massage therapist or massage establishment licensed under the provisions of this act shall include the number of the license in any advertisement of massage therapy services appearing in a newspaper, airwave transmission, telephone directory, or other advertising medium. Pending licensure of a new massage establishment ~~under pursuant to the provisions of s. 480.043(7)~~, the license number of a licensed massage therapist who is an owner or principal officer of the establishment may be used in lieu of the license number for the establishment.

Section 14. Paragraphs (a), (b), and (c) of subsection (1) of section 480.047, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

480.047 Penalties.—

(1) It is unlawful for any person to:

(a) Hold himself or herself out as a massage therapist or to practice massage therapy unless duly licensed under this chapter or unless otherwise specifically exempted from licensure under this chapter.

(b) Operate any massage establishment unless it has been duly licensed as provided herein, except that nothing herein shall be construed to prevent the teaching of massage therapy in this state at a board-approved massage therapy school.

(c) Permit an employed person to practice massage therapy unless duly licensed as provided herein.

Section 15. Section 480.052, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

480.052 Power of county or municipality to regulate massage therapy. A county or municipality, within its jurisdiction, may regulate persons and establishments licensed under this chapter. Such regulation shall not exceed the powers of the state under this act or be inconsistent with this act. This section shall not be construed to prohibit a county or municipality from enacting any regulation of persons or establishments not licensed pursuant to this act.

Section 16. Subsections (1) and (2) of section 480.0535, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

480.0535 Documents required while working in a massage establishment.—

(1) In order to provide the department and law enforcement agencies the means to more effectively identify, investigate, and arrest persons engaging in human trafficking, a person employed by a massage establishment and any person performing massage therapy therein must immediately present, upon the request of an investigator of the department or a law enforcement officer, valid government identification while in the establishment. A valid government identification for the purposes of this section is:

- (a) A valid, unexpired driver license issued by any state, territory, or district of the United States;
- (b) A valid, unexpired identification card issued by any state, territory, or district of the United States;
- (c) A valid, unexpired United States passport;
- (d) A naturalization certificate issued by the United States Department of Homeland Security;
- (e) A valid, unexpired alien registration receipt card (green card); or
- (f) A valid, unexpired employment authorization card issued by the United States Department of Homeland Security.

(2) A person operating a massage establishment must:

- (a) Immediately present, upon the request of an investigator of the department or a law enforcement officer:
 - 1. Valid government identification while in the establishment.
 - 2. A copy of the documentation specified in paragraph (1)(a) for each employee and any person performing massage therapy in the establishment.
- (b) Ensure that each employee and any person performing massage therapy in the massage establishment is able to immediately present, upon the request of an investigator of the department or a law enforcement officer, valid government identification while in the establishment.

Section 17. Section 627.6407, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

627.6407 Massage.—Any policy of health insurance that provides coverage for massage shall also cover the services of persons licensed to practice massage therapy pursuant to chapter 480, where the massage therapy, as defined in chapter 480, has been prescribed by a physician licensed under chapter 458, chapter 459, chapter 460, or chapter 461, as being medically necessary and the prescription specifies the number of treatments.

Section 18. Section 627.6619, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

627.6619 Massage.—Any policy of health insurance that provides coverage for massage shall also cover the services of persons licensed to practice massage therapy pursuant to chapter 480, where the massage therapy, as defined in chapter 480, has been prescribed by a physician licensed under chapter 458, chapter 459, chapter 460, or chapter 461, as being medically necessary and the prescription specifies the number of treatments.

Section 19. Paragraph (a) of subsection (1) of section 627.736, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

627.736 Required personal injury protection benefits; exclusions; priority; claims.—

(1) **REQUIRED BENEFITS.**—An insurance policy complying with the security requirements of s. 627.733 must provide personal injury protection to the named insured, relatives residing in the same household, persons operating the insured motor vehicle, passengers in the motor vehicle, and other persons struck by the motor vehicle and suffering bodily injury while not an occupant of a self-propelled vehicle, subject to subsection (2) and paragraph (4)(e), to a limit of \$10,000 in medical and disability benefits and \$5,000 in death benefits resulting from bodily injury, sickness, disease, or death arising out of the ownership, maintenance, or use of a motor vehicle as follows:

(a) **Medical benefits.**—Eighty percent of all reasonable expenses for medically necessary medical, surgical, X-ray, dental, and rehabilitative services, including prosthetic devices and medically necessary ambulance, hospital, and nursing services if the individual receives initial services and care pursuant to subparagraph 1. within 14 days after the motor vehicle accident. The medical benefits provide reimbursement only for:

1. Initial services and care that are lawfully provided, supervised, ordered, or prescribed by a physician licensed under chapter 458 or chapter 459, a dentist licensed under chapter 466, a chiropractic physician licensed under chapter 460, or an advanced practice registered nurse registered under s. 464.0123 or that are provided in a hospital or in a facility that owns, or is wholly owned by, a hospital. Initial services and care may also be provided by a person or entity licensed under part III of chapter 401 which provides emergency transportation and treatment.

2. Upon referral by a provider described in subparagraph 1., followup services and care consistent with the underlying medical diagnosis rendered pursuant to subparagraph 1. which may be provided, supervised, ordered, or prescribed only by a physician licensed under chapter 458 or chapter 459, a chiropractic physician licensed under chapter 460, a dentist licensed under chapter 466, or an advanced practice registered nurse registered under s. 464.0123, or, to the extent permitted by applicable law and under the supervision of such physician, osteopathic physician, chiropractic physician, or dentist, by a physician assistant licensed under chapter 458 or chapter 459 or an advanced practice registered nurse licensed under chapter 464. Followup services and care may also be provided by the following persons or entities:

a. A hospital or ambulatory surgical center licensed under chapter 395.

b. An entity wholly owned by one or more physicians licensed under chapter 458 or chapter 459, chiropractic physicians licensed under chapter 460, advanced practice registered nurses registered under s. 464.0123, or dentists licensed under chapter 466 or by such practitioners and the spouse, parent, child, or sibling of such practitioners.

c. An entity that owns or is wholly owned, directly or indirectly, by a hospital or hospitals.

d. A physical therapist licensed under chapter 486, based upon a referral by a provider described in this subparagraph.

e. A health care clinic licensed under part X of chapter 400 which is accredited by an accrediting organization whose standards incorporate comparable regulations required by this state, or

(I) Has a medical director licensed under chapter 458, chapter 459, or chapter 460;

(II) Has been continuously licensed for more than 3 years or is a publicly traded corporation that issues securities traded on an exchange registered with the United States Securities and Exchange Commission as a national securities exchange; and

(III) Provides at least four of the following medical specialties:

(A) General medicine.

(B) Radiography.

(C) Orthopedic medicine.

(D) Physical medicine.

(E) Physical therapy.

(F) Physical rehabilitation.

(G) Prescribing or dispensing outpatient prescription medication.

(H) Laboratory services.

3. Reimbursement for services and care provided in subparagraph 1. or subparagraph 2. up to \$10,000 if a physician licensed under chapter 458 or chapter 459, a dentist licensed under chapter 466, a physician assistant licensed under chapter 458 or chapter 459, or an advanced practice registered nurse licensed under chapter 464 has determined that the injured person had an emergency medical condition.

4. Reimbursement for services and care provided in subparagraph 1. or subparagraph 2. is limited to \$2,500 if a provider listed in subparagraph 1. or subparagraph 2. determines that the injured person did not have an emergency medical condition.

5. Medical benefits do not include massage therapy as defined in s. 480.033 or acupuncture as defined in s. 457.102, regardless of the person, entity, or licensee providing massage therapy or acupuncture, and a licensed

massage therapist or licensed acupuncturist may not be reimbursed for medical benefits under this section.

6. The Financial Services Commission shall adopt by rule the form that must be used by an insurer and a health care provider specified in sub-subparagraph 2.b., sub-subparagraph 2.c., or sub-subparagraph 2.e. to document that the health care provider meets the criteria of this paragraph. Such rule must include a requirement for a sworn statement or affidavit.

Only insurers writing motor vehicle liability insurance in this state may provide the required benefits of this section, and such insurer may not require the purchase of any other motor vehicle coverage other than the purchase of property damage liability coverage as required by s. 627.7275 as a condition for providing such benefits. Insurers may not require that property damage liability insurance in an amount greater than \$10,000 be purchased in conjunction with personal injury protection. Such insurers shall make benefits and required property damage liability insurance coverage available through normal marketing channels. An insurer writing motor vehicle liability insurance in this state who fails to comply with such availability requirement as a general business practice violates part IX of chapter 626, and such violation constitutes an unfair method of competition or an unfair or deceptive act or practice involving the business of insurance. An insurer committing such violation is subject to the penalties provided under that part, as well as those provided elsewhere in the insurance code.

Section 20. Subsection (37) of section 641.31, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

641.31 Health maintenance contracts.—

(37) All health maintenance contracts that provide coverage for massage must also cover the services of persons licensed to practice massage therapy pursuant to chapter 480 if the massage is prescribed by a contracted physician licensed under chapter 458, chapter 459, chapter 460, or chapter 461 as medically necessary and the prescription specifies the number of treatments. Such massage services are subject to the same terms, conditions, and limitations as those of other covered services.

Section 21. Subsection (3) of section 823.05, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

823.05 Places and groups engaged in certain activities declared a nuisance; abatement and enjoinder.—

(3) A massage establishment as defined in s. 480.033 ~~s. 480.033(7)~~ which operates in violation of s. 480.0475 or s. 480.0535(2) is declared a nuisance and may be abated or enjoined as provided in ss. 60.05 and 60.06.

Section 22. This act shall take effect July 1, 2021.

Approved by the Governor June 21, 2021.

Filed in Office Secretary of State June 21, 2021.