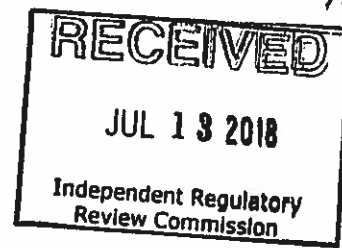


From: Melinda Martin
To: ST. Regulatory Counsel
Subject: Increased fees response
Date: Thursday, July 12, 2018 5:04:26 PM



To the State Board of Massage Therapy,

Greetings, my name is Melinda Martin, I have been a licensed massage therapist since 2011 and have been practicing massage therapy ever since.

I was recently informed that the State Board is proposing to increase fees for first-time initial applications, continuing education approvals, as well as the renewal fee biannually.

I understand the need for the board to increase his fees due to the lack of massage therapist renewing their license, as well as the decrease of students pursuing massage therapy as a career.

The board is not at fault for these actions as the true culprit of this demise are business owners not paying licensed massage therapist the wages they truly deserve and earn. I wish there was a way to push business owners to increase the wages for licensed massage therapist. Maybe this act would balance things out and more people would be continuing massage therapy for a career.

But unfortunately it is not and this is the results of their actions.

I will say this though, if the board chooses to increase their fees at the stated rates proposed, you will have a definite increase in massage therapists not renewing their license as well as less interested student applicants.

Since massage therapists are being paid such low wages and you intend to increase your fees drastically, how will they be able to afford the newly set fees?

This action would not only completely destroy the future of licensed massage therapist but could potentially eliminate the State Board of Massage Therapy.

I understand the need for the board to increase its fees so that the board can be in operation, which is why I proposed that you increase the fees only slightly. For example, the initial application fee for students of \$65 could be increased to \$85. The approval fee for continuing education which is now at \$65 I would only increase to \$75. Continuing education courses are and can be extremely expensive. If you drastically jump the \$65 to \$100, providers will naturally have to increase their fees and making it less affordable which in turn lessons students. And lastly the biannual renewal fee of \$75 how to \$200 is an absurd increase. This is almost tripling the amount and would make it impossible for licensed therapists to stay licensed. I propose that you increase the rate from \$75 to \$95. This proposal is the only suitable option for you at this time. You cannot fix in a short amount of time what is happening with licensed massage therapists and wages. But over time a solution could present itself which would balance everything out so that being a licensed massage therapist would be affordable beneficial and rewarding.

I implore you to think realistically and understand the results if you choose to move forward with your rates. This action can only do more harm for the State Board. Nothing good can or will come out of it.

If anything, the State Board should be discussing and strategizing away for current licensed massage therapist to be treated with respect, dignity, and a proper wage within local businesses. That is the true source of all the demise, you nip that thing in the butt and I'm sure things will even itself out.

Thank you for your time and consideration, I hope the board will think, Ponder, and pray about the future of our career.

Sincerely,

Melinda Martin