

3203

From: Trudi D
To: ST. Regulatory Counsel
Subject: Regulation #16A-724 (IRRC #3203)
Date: Sunday, July 22, 2018 11:51:09 AM

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Independent Regulatory
Review Commission

Dear Ms. Wolfgang:

I am writing today to go on-record as being opposed to the above-referenced proposed regulation. Before I get into the details of my opposition, I would like to express my disappointment that I did not hear about this proposal directly from the State Board of Massage Therapy. As with other proposed regulations, I heard about this one through social media and my professional organizations. In a way, this is one of the reasons I do not believe that an increase in fees is justified.

Rather than put the burden of a budget shortfall on those of us who follow the rules, I would like to see the Board be more effective in collecting fines and penalties from those who do not. As it is, the Board's main function has been to create additional barriers to being a licensed massage therapist in this state. Their recent proposal to limit the types of continuing education that qualify for license renewal is an example of such unnecessary and wasted work. It represents the inefficiency of the board.

Since the revenue sources page of the financial report shows penalties, I'd have to assume that they are enforcing the regulations. However, I have heard from too many of my colleagues about reports going uninvestigated or the process to make the report being onerous. Also, the sharp decrease in penalty revenue from FY15-16 to FY16-17 tells me that enforcement has decreased as well.

I also saw the a claim that other states collect similar fees. The difference, though, is that those states' boards actually keep their licensees informed of their activities and actively pursue reports of unlicensed practitioners. I began my massage career in Virginia, where license renewal was \$95 biennially. (I have heard from colleagues who still live there that they actually reduced it to \$75 in the last cycle.) In Virginia, massage therapists received updates of proposed changes to massage regulations, and we could also sign up to receive emails related to their enforcement activities and outcomes. We were able to see how licensing benefited both the massage therapy profession and the public. Most of what Pennsylvania's massage therapy board does is only broadcast when the changes are imminent -- unless, of course, you have the luxury of traveling to Harrisburg to attend the meetings.

I ask that Pennsylvania's Board of Massage therapy seek other ways for balancing their budget. Eliminating inefficiencies and redundancies, increasing enforcement of the existing regulations and collection of penalties, and discontinuing work that does not benefit the massage therapy community are only a few alternatives to increasing licensing fees.

I hope you will encourage them to make those alternatives their main focus.

Sincerely,

Trudi Dixon, LMT

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