

RE: SB19-089

Exempt Colorado Department of Higher Education Regulation Professional Organization Member Education

Concerning the exemption from regulation by the private occupational school division approved by a professional organization that primarily benefits the organization's membership.

I am Mary Kathleen Rose, and I am a licensed massage therapist in the state of Colorado. I have been practicing since 1985, and teaching since 1990. I understand the need for the Division of Private Occupational Schools (DPOS) to regulate the schools they oversee in Colorado. It is important to ensure that students are getting what they pay for, as they invest in a new occupation. *However, in the massage profession, continuing education – which is not mandatory to the practice of therapeutic massage – does not need such oversight.*

According to the "Association Exemption" (CRS 23-64-104(1)(h)), massage professionals should be able to further their education by taking courses from instructors who are approved by the National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage & Bodywork (NCBTMB). This national association approves experienced and qualified instructors in their field of expertise.

I have been approved by the NCBTMB since 2000 to teach continuing education courses in my field of expertise, which is "Comfort Touch: Massage for the Elderly and the Ill." I have been sponsored by massage schools, community colleges, hospices, hospitals, and senior care communities in Colorado, and across the United States, to teach this work.

(I am an internationally known author in my area of expertise, having written a textbook, and numerous articles for professional journals. I have been involved in NIH-funded research projects regarding massage in medical settings, including one at Craig Rehabilitation Hospital here in Denver.)

Licensed massage therapists in Colorado, seek continuing education to enhance their professional skills. The NCBTMB has done a good job of regulating and approving providers of continuing education.

Currently, I am deeply concerned about access to continuing education in our profession. It has been my work, and my commitment to fill a need, not met by most core curriculum of massage therapy schools. I educate people about the principles and techniques that are required to work with the elderly, the ill, and other special populations. My work has provided interested massage therapists with the skills they need to share a much-needed complementary therapy in medical settings.

Several of the schools where I have taught over the years are no longer in business, so it becomes difficult to find a place in which to teach, if I am not able to teach on my own. And as I look at the prospect of retiring, I ask, "Who will take over for me?" Who will have the commitment and passion to continue to teach this much-needed niche in the practice of therapeutic massage? What incentive do skilled and experienced practitioners have to teach if they face daunting fees and regulations to even begin teaching continuing education? NCBTMB requires that a course be taught for a minimum of two years, before they even consider a teacher for approval.

I urge you to pass SB 19-089 to support quality and variety of continuing education in the field of massage therapy in Colorado. Please keep opportunities open for us to teach, innovate, and simply earn a living doing what we love, in order to enhance the health and well-being of all people in Colorado.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

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