



**Republic of the Philippines
Department of Health
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY**

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER
No. 2010 - 0034

**SUBJECT : REVISED IMPLEMENTING RULES AND REGULATIONS GOVERNING
MESSAGE CLINICS AND SAUNA ESTABLISHMENTS**

I. RATIONALE

Traditional medicine throughout the world recognizes the significance of therapeutic massage in managing stress, illnesses or chronic ailments. Massage therapy is considered the oldest method of healing that applies various techniques like fixed or movable pressure, holding, vibration, rocking, friction, kneading and compression using primarily the hands and other areas of the body such as the forearms, elbows or feet to the muscular structure and soft tissues of the body.

Massage therapy can lead to significant biochemical, physical, behavioral and clinical changes in massage as well as the person giving the massage. It contributes to a higher sense of general well-being. Recognizing this, many healthcare professionals have begun to incorporate massage therapy as a complement to their routine clinical care. Efficacy of massage therapy in patient ranges from preterm neonates to senior citizens.

To effectively carry out the provisions of Section XIII of PD 856 – “Massage Clinics and Sauna Bath Establishments”, the Department of Health created the Committee of Examiners for Massage Therapy (CEMT) to regulate the practice of massage therapy, hence, ensure that only qualified individuals enter the regulated profession and that the care and services which the massage therapists provide are within the standards of practice.

The revision of the implementing rules and regulations will further adopt current trends and modern practices of massage; it will prepare massage therapists of becoming more competent and globally competitive. At the same time, it will help improve the quality of health service, as well as in the performance of massage therapists.

II. OBJECTIVES

General: To set sanitation standards to governing facilities providing massage services.

Specific:

1. Upgrade the quality of health services being accorded to the public;
2. Delineate the scope of functions of massage therapists and offices responsible in the management of the practice;
3. Recognize the specific offices responsible relative to the management of facilities providing massage services; and
4. Instill the essence of compassionate service to the public/clients.

III. SCOPE

These implementing rules and regulations shall apply to all facilities providing massage services, and the practitioners.

IV. DEFINITION OF TERMS

To provide the implementers / stakeholders a common frame of reference in the interpretation of the guidelines, the following terms are herein defined as used in this Order:

1. **Accreditation** – This refers to the act of recognition or a method of determining that an eligible organization, institution, individual or program complies with the approved standards.
2. **Assessor** – This refers to a person expert to the industry of massage, appointed by the chairman of the Committee of Examiners for Massage Therapy (CEMT) to conduct practical assessment to the candidates undergoing DOH massage therapy oral and practical licensure examination.
3. **Certificate of Registration** – This refers to a written commendation issued by the DOH-CEMT authorizing a person to practice massage therapy as a profession.
4. **Committee** – This refers to the Department of Health Committee of Examiners for Massage Therapy (CEMT).
5. **Continuing Massage Therapy Education (CMTE)** - This refers to the acquisition of knowledge, skills,

ethical and moral values after the initial registration of a massage therapist, which improves and enhances his/her technical competence in massage therapy.

6. **Health Certificate** – This refers to a written commendation issued by the city or municipal health officer to persons providing massage services after passing the required physical and medical examinations to include and having been administered the required immunizations:

- 6.1 X-Ray/Fluoroscopic examination
- 6.2 Stool and other examination required

7. **Licensed Massage Therapist** – This refers to a trained person who passed the licensure examination for massage therapists. He / She is a holder of a valid Certificate of Registration (COR) and license for massage therapists issued by the Department of Health (DOH) Committee of Examiners for Massage Therapy (CEMT).

8. **Massage Therapy** – This refers to a system of assessment, evaluation and manual application techniques used in a scientific manner taking into account the muscle locations, stress points and other anatomical considerations of the human body. It includes adjunctive external application of water, heat and cold, stretching, passive and active joint movement within the normal physiologic range of motion as a means of promoting pain relief, injury rehabilitation or health improvement in a safe, non-sexual environment that respects the client's self-determined outcome for the session.

V. GENERAL GUIDELINES

Article 1 Organization, Structure and Functions

SECTION 1. COMMITTEE OF EXAMINERS FOR MASSAGE THERAPY (CEMT)

1.1. Membership

1.1.1. There shall be a Committee of Examiners for Massage Therapy, hereinafter referred to as the "Committee", created by the Department of Health, through a Department Personnel Order which shall be directly under the Secretary of Health. The "Committee" shall be composed of a chairperson, vice-chairperson and members coming from the following offices / organizations and shall hold office for three (3) years or until their successors shall have been appointed and duly qualified without prejudice to reappointment for another term.

- Health Human Resource Development Bureau – Chairperson
- Environmental Health Office – Vice-Chairperson
- Sanitary engineer – Member
- Medical Practitioner – Member
- Physical Therapist – Member
- Legal officer – Member
- Massage Therapists – Members / Assessors / Facilitators (active members of an organization of massage therapists)

1.1.2. The (HHRDB) shall serve as the Committee Secretariat.

1.2. Powers, Duties and Functions of the Committee

1.2.1. To announce, schedule and hold examinations for massage therapists; to approve or disapprove applications for examination and to perform all other duties pertinent and related thereto;

1.2.2. To issue licenses to massage therapists who have satisfactorily passed the licensure examination and have complied with the requirements prescribed by law; to deny the issuance of license to any candidate and/or to cancel the license issued to any holder of certificate upon conviction of any criminal offence involving moral turpitude, or has been declared to be of unsound mind or physically unfit, or who has been found violating existing laws, rules and regulations as the case maybe;

1.2.3. To issue certified true copies of lost or damaged licenses for massage therapists;

1.2.4. To conduct investigations all sworn complaints against licensed massage therapists and to submit its findings and recommendations to the Secretary of Health for appropriate action;

1.2.5. To accredit institutions, associations or trainers conducting training programs and review courses for massage therapists;

1.2.6. To establish criteria for the accreditation of institutions, associations or trainers who shall train the massage therapists;

1.2.7. It shall be the duty of the Department of Health (DOH) Committee of Examiners for Massage Therapy (CEMT) to cause the monitoring of massage therapists of massage establishment at least twice

a year or as may be deemed necessary for the enforcement of the rules and regulations as applied to massage therapists.

1.2.9. To perform other functions necessary to regulate, standardize, professionalize and uplift the practice of massage.

1.2.10. To perform such other related duties assigned by the Secretary of Health to implement pertinent provisions of the Code on Sanitation of the Philippines and these implementing rules and regulations.

1.3 Allowance

The Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and Members of the Committee shall receive a monthly allowance during their term of office. Likewise, they are allowed to receive honorarium as resource speakers/persons under Administrative Order No. 93 s.2003 dated September 23, 2003.

SECTION 2. CONTINUING MESSAGE THERAPY EDUCATION COUNCIL (CMTEC)

2.1. Composition

2.1.1. In accordance to the provisions of Administrative Order No. 2008-0031, the DOH Committee of Examiners for Massage Therapy (CEMT) hereby creates the three-member composition of the Continuing Massage Therapy Education Council (CMTEC)

2.1.2. The CMTE Council shall be composed of a chairperson and two (2) members and will be assisted by the CEMT Secretariat. The chairperson shall be designated amongst the members of the CEMT. The first member shall be chosen from amongst the members of the DOH accredited training institutions for massage therapists by the members themselves. The second member shall be chosen from among the licensed massage therapists (active organization with the most number of massage therapist members) who are in active practice with valid certificate of registration and updated license and chosen among the members themselves.

2.2. Powers, Duties and Functions

2.2.1. Accept, evaluate and approve applications for accreditation of CMTE programs, activities or sources as to their relevance to the profession; and determine the number of CMTE credit units to be earned on the basis of the contents of the program, activity or source submitted by the CMTE providers;

2.2.2. Determine the appropriateness of the training fee vis-a-vis the training course / programs, activities and sources to be offered;

2.2.3. Monitor the implementation of CMTE programs, activities or sources;

2.2.4. Assess periodically and upgrade criteria for CMTE programs, activities or sources; and

2.2.5. Perform such other related functions that may be incidental to the implementation of the CMTE programs, activities or sources.

2.3. Honoraria

The Chairperson and two Members of the Council shall receive the same compensation / honorarium as resource speakers/persons under Administrative Order No. 93 s.2003 dated September 23, 2003.

Article 2 Examination, Registration and Practice

SECTION 3. EXAMINATION

3.1. Date of Examination

Examination for massage therapists shall be conducted any day of the first week of June and December of every year. In exceptional cases, the committee may give examination on other dates outside the prescribed ones as may deemed necessary.

3.2. Place of Examination

3.2.1. The examination for massage therapists shall be conducted at the Department of Health, Manila, or

3.2.2. At any Department of Health regional health offices as determined by the committee upon the recommendation of the regional director.

3.3. Qualifications of Applicants

3.3.1. Applicants for the licensure examination must possess the following qualifications:

- a. He/she must be a Filipino citizen, at least eighteen (18) years old at the time of the examination;
- b. He/she must be of good moral character certified by the Barangay Captain of the community where the applicant resides.
- c. He/she must submit a certification or clearance from the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) or provincial fiscal that he/she is not convicted by the court of any case involving moral turpitude;
- d. He/she must submit medical certificate from a government physician that he/she is physically and mentally fit to take the licensure examination;
- e. He/she must be at least a high school graduate;
- f. He/she must submit a certificate of training from any Department of Health accredited training provider that he/she has taken practical massage for at least sixty (60) hours;
- g. He/she must submit certificate of training from any Department of Health accredited training institution that he/she had received basic instructions on the following:

COURSE CODE	COURSE TITLE	COURSE DESCRIPTION
ANA	Anatomy & Physiology	General and Organ System Anatomy
PHY	Physiology	General and Organ System Physiology
PTH	Pathology / Microbiology	General Pathology and Microbiology
MT I	Massage Therapy I	Introduction to Massage Therapy
MT II	Massage Therapy II	Massage Therapy Application
MT III	Massage Therapy III	Practice of Massage Therapy

3.4. Application and Examination Fees

3.4.1 Applicants must submit to the committee secretariat the prescribed application form duly accomplished and notarized and accompanied by three (3) copies of passport size photograph taken within the last six (6) months;

3.4.2 Applicants shall pay an examination fee in the amount prescribed by the Department of Health Committee of Examiners for Massage Therapy; and

3.4.3 The application form and examination fee, including the necessary documents stated, must be filed two (2) weeks before the examination date in order for the applicant to be included in the list of examinees.

3.5. Scope of Examination

The examination shall be conducted in two (2) parts; theoretical and oral/practical. The theoretical examination shall be conducted in writing and shall comprise basic questions based on the prescribed curriculum (Article 2, Section 3.3). The oral/practical examination shall consist of three (3) phases: (1) pre-massage phase, (2) massage proper and (3) post-massage phase.

3.6. Passing Average

3.6.1 Only those who have passed the theoretical examination shall qualify to take the oral/practical examination.

3.6.2 All examinees who passed the theoretical examination shall take the oral/practical examination within one (1) month after official advice, otherwise, the results of the theoretical examination shall be deemed cancelled. He/she shall pay the fee prescribed by DOH;

3.6.3 In order that an examinee maybe deemed to have passed the examination successfully, he/she must obtain a general average of 75% in the theoretical examination and a general average of 75% in the oral/practical examination.

SECTION 4. CERTIFICATE OF REGISTRATION

4.1. Issuance

4.1.1 All examinees who have passed the required examination shall be issued a certificate of registration duly signed by the chairperson of the committee and approved by the Secretary of Health.

4.1.2 The certificate of registration shall bear the recent picture and signature of the successful examinee and will be valid for three (3) years from the date of issuance. Payment of registration and miscellaneous fees shall be paid to the Department of Health.

4.1.3 The certificate of registration shall be posted conspicuously in the establishment concerned.

4.2. Renewal of the Certificate of Registration

4.2.1 A massage therapist shall apply for the renewal of the certificate of registration and miscellaneous fees for three(3) years on his/her birth month to any regional health office;

4.2.2 The following requirements shall be presented when applying for renewal of the certificate of registration:

- a. Health certificate;
- b. Current professional tax receipt;
- c. Current community tax certificate;
- d. Receipt as payment of registration and miscellaneous fees for three (3) years in the amount prescribed by the Department of Health
- e. Certificate of attendance to continuing education/training on massage conducted by accredited institutions/associations/trainers;
- f. When all the requirements are found in order, the said certificate shall be stamped with the notation "VALIDITY UNTIL _____" and the receipt number of registration fee and the signature of the regional health director concerned shall be affixed below.

4.2.3 The regional health director concerned shall submit the list of renewed licenses of massage therapists to the Committee every last quarter of the year.

4.3. Suspension or Revocation of Certificate of Registration

4.3.1 The Committee and / or the regional health office concerned shall recommend to the Secretary of Health to reprimand erring massage therapists by suspension or revocation of the certificate of all those found guilty after due investigation on any of the following grounds:

- a. Conviction by a court of competent jurisdiction of any criminal offence involving moral turpitude;
- b. Insanity;
- c. Fraud in the acquisition or renewal of the certificate of registration;
- d. Gross negligence, ignorance or incompetence in the practice of his/her occupation;
- e. Addiction to alcoholic drinks and prohibited drugs;
- f. False or unethical advertisement and practice;
- g. Physical incapacity which will impair the performance of duty as a massage therapist;
- h. Failure to revalidate the certificate of registration for at least five (5) years; and
- i. Other analogous grounds affecting the occupation.

SECTION 5. PRACTICE OF MASSAGE

5.1. Licensed massage therapists shall practice massage in accordance with the following:

5.1.1 No person is authorized to practice massage as a profession in the Philippines without holding a valid certificate of registration issued by the Committee and approved by the Secretary of Health;

5.1.2 It is absolutely prohibited for any qualified or practicing massage therapist to use the "Dr." sign before, or the letters "M.D." after his/her name in advertising his/her profession in the newspapers, cards, signboards or any other means of advertisement.

5.1.3 No massage therapist shall engage in any other occupation which may infect his/her hands and transfer the disease to other person. In case of disease/infection, the massage therapist shall inhibit him/herself in the practice of massage until such time that the infection has been cured.

5.1.4 No massage therapist is allowed to prescribe any form of drugs or medical therapy.

5.1.5 No massage therapist shall perform massage to any person by using or applying substance or preparation of any kind containing chemicals or materials that are detrimental to human health and hygiene.

5.1.6 Massage therapists shall comply with the standard and scientifically accepted procedures and techniques in performing massage to any person.

5.1.7 Massage therapists shall possess an annual up-to-date health certificate secured from the Department of Health accredited government clinic or hospital;

5.1.8 The health certificate shall be clipped visibly in the upper left portion of the uniform worn while working;

5.1.9 The massage therapist shall wear a clean working garment when attending to clients;

5.1.10 The massage therapist shall wash his/her hands thoroughly with soap, water and 70% isopropyl alcohol before and after attending to clients;

5.1.11 The massage therapist shall not be allowed to render other services, other standard massage;

5.1.12 A licensed massage therapist shall render no more than eight (8) hours of supervision a day.

5.2. Career Path

5.2.1. Human Resource Production, Utilization, Placement and Development

The Committee, in coordination with the accredited training institutions and accredited training providers, as well as the professional organizations, is hereby mandated to formulate and develop a comprehensive Massage Therapy Program through a continuing massage therapy education that includes a valid assessment of career performance and potential, thus, upgrade the level of skills of massage therapists in the country, such as but not limited to the areas of performing massage procedures as may be determined by the Committee.

5.2.2. Salary and Compensation

In order to enhance the general welfare and commitment to service and professionalism of massage therapists, the minimum base pay of licensed massage therapists working in massage clinics, sauna establishments, training institutions and areas relevant to the practice of the profession, shall not be lower than the prescribed minimum wage by the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE). Provided, that for licensed massage therapist working in small establishments, adjustments to their salaries shall be in accordance with their number of clients per month as per agreement between the employer and the massage therapist.

SECTION 6. FUNCTIONS / RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE REGIONAL DIRECTOR

6.1. The Regional Director shall:

6.1.1 Act on the renewal of the certificates of registration of massage therapists through the Human Resource Development Units (HRDUs);

6.1.2 Submit the list of renewed licenses of massage therapist to the Committee every last quarter of the year;

6.1.3 Recommend to the Secretary of Health through the Committee, the suspension or revocation of the certificate of the erring massage therapist.

Article 3 Penal Provisions

SECTION 7. PENAL PROVISION

7.1. Any person who shall violate, disobey, refuse, omit or neglect to comply with any of the provisions of these rules and regulations, interfere with or hinder, or oppose any officer, agent or member of the Department or of the bureaus and officers under it, in the performance of his/her duty as such under these rules and regulations, or shall tear down, mutilate, deface or alter any placard, or notice, affixed to the premises in the enforcement of these rules and regulations, shall be prosecuted before the Court of Justice as provided in Section 103 (a) and (b) of the Code of Sanitation of the Philippines (P.D. 856).

7.2. All massage therapist and other personnel who shall violate the provision of P.D. 856 and the IRR shall be punished by revocation or suspension of license to practice the profession or shall be prosecuted under Section 103 (a) and (b) of P.D. 856.

SECTION 8. SEPARABILITY CLAUSE

In the event that any rule, section, paragraph, sentence, clause or words of these implementing rules and regulations is declared invalid for any reason, the other provisions thereof shall not be affected thereby.

SECTION 9. REPEALING CLAUSE

All rules and regulations which are inconsistent with the provisions of these implementing rules and regulations are hereby repealed or amended accordingly. As thus amended, all other provisions in this AO still stands in effect.

SECTION 10. EFFECTIVITY

These rules and regulations shall take effect after fifteen (15) days from date of publication in the official gazette or newspaper of general circulation.


ENRIQUE T. ONA, MD, FPCS, FACS
Secretary of Health

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS ON DOH MASSAGE THERAPY LICENSURE

1. How can I become a massage therapist?

You can become a massage therapist by acquiring the virtues and skills necessary for massage therapy. You must receive training first and then be officially recognized through licensure.

2. I understand the need for training, but what is licensure all about?

Having a license means that permission has been granted to you by a competent authority to engage in a regulated activity, occupation or profession. Without permission, engaging in those regulated activity would be unlawful. Before granting permission, the licensing authority will make sure that you have the proper attitude, knowledge, and skills required for the work. The sole licensing authority for all massage activities in the Philippines is the Department of Health (DOH) through its *Committee of Examiners for Massage Therapy* (Ref. PD 856, DOH IRR, DOH AO 2010-34).

3. Why is DOH licensure necessary?

Licensure is necessary because it is the State's responsibility to make sure that any gainful practice of health care or any activity that affects the health of citizens is performed safely and with competence. DOH is the primary agency that has this constitutional mandate. Is massage therapy a health care service?

4. Is massage therapy a health care service?

Yes, definitely. Massage is not only an art. Like other health sciences, it is also a science. Massage affects every system in our body. It aids healing and promotes health. Massage Therapy is recognized as an indispensable auxiliary to medical care, and a valuable means of preventive health care. It can be very beneficial if applied correctly. However, if applied incorrectly, it can result in bodily harm and pain.

5. What are the requirements?

Good moral character, a spirit of caring service, and compassion are the fundamental attitudes required of anyone who wishes to work in the health care professions. The minimum academic requirement is a high school diploma.

6. When does the DOH conduct the licensure examination?

The DOH conducts examinations twice yearly: on the first week of June and December. For this undertaking, it is partnered with the UP College of Medicine.

7. What subject areas are covered by the DOH licensure examination?

The five subject areas covered by the massage therapy licensure exam are *Anatomy and Physiology, Microbiology and Pathology, Fundamentals of Massage Therapy, Massage Therapy Application, and Professional Practice.*

8. Where do I enroll for training?

You need to enroll in a training institution that is accredited with the DOH. These institutions are tasked

with training, reviewing, and screening candidates for the DOH LMT licensure examinations.

9. What are the documentary requirements for enrollment?

Accredited training institutions will require you to submit the following upon enrollment: Birth Certificate (NSO), Barangay Certificate of Good Moral Character, NBI Clearance, Medical Certificate, Diploma or Transcript of Record (at least high school), Marriage Contract (if married), and two passport photos.

10. How long does it take to train for the DOH licensure examination?

Nominally, the licensure course comprises 210 hours of classroom instruction plus 60 hours of practical, on-the-job training. However, this can be adjusted if the accredited training institution is willing to recognize your previous academic credits. Every training institution would have its own schedule of classes.

11. If I already have an international certificate for massage, do I still need a DOH license?

Yes, you do if you want to work in the Philippines. Your international certificate may give you recognition in other countries, depending on each country's laws regulating massage. In the Philippines, the law requires all massage practitioners to register with DOH. Registration means licensure.

12. If I already have a PRC license (eg: MD, RN, PT) do I still need a DOH license?

Yes, you do. If you have a professional license in an allied health profession, you may already have the required knowledge base, but it does not follow that you have the specialized skills required in *applied* massage therapy. In any case, your background is an advantage and it should be relatively easier for you to pass the exam and obtain a license in massage therapy.

13. If I already have a TESDA certificate, do I still need a DOH license?

Yes, you do. TESDA issues certificates, not licenses. By law, DOH is the sole licensing authority for all massage activities in the Philippines.

14. Why – what is the difference between a TESDA certificate and the DOH license?

The main difference between TESDA and DOH are their institutional objectives, competence, and legal authority. TESDA conducts training and issues certificates for *purposes of immediate livelihood.* Massage is primarily a health care service. The DOH screens and licenses practitioners for *purposes of health.* The authority of the DOH overrides that of TESDA because the right to health has precedence over livelihood. Finally, Philippine law vests sole licensing authority for massage on DOH, not on TESDA.

15. I have already been doing massage for many years now, but only in barber shops and beauty salons. Do I still need a license for that?

Yes. Any and all gainful massage activities fall under the jurisdiction of the DOH, including barber shops and beauty salons.

16. I am presently employed and may have difficulty attending review classes. What can I do?

If you are currently employed, you can contact the accredited training institution near you and inquire if they have special programs or schedules for working students.

17. How much is the tuition for the review course?

The current tuition for the LMT review course ranges from PhP 8,000 to PhP 15,000. Some training institutions may adjust their tuitions according to the enrollees' learning abilities, work experiences, or capacity to pay. (Note: While tuition may appear high, an established massage therapist can easily recover this investment in one month.)

18. What about blind persons and those who have been practicing massage for many years and already have practical skills in massage?

19. Unsighted persons may have practical skills in massage, but the law requires them to understand

the science behind what they are doing. The DOH accommodates blind examinees for this purpose. They can still obtain their DOH license by enrolling in an accredited training institution that offers special review courses for blind persons and taking the DOH licensure examination.

20. What are the career prospects in Massage Therapy?

Health, fitness, and wellness are among the fastest growing global industries. This is because growing older, getting tired, and getting sick are inevitable and normal to the human condition.

The fitness, integrative health, and spa industries are growing worldwide, including in Asia and the Philippines. Medical spas and health care facilities do need LMTs.

Massage therapy is among those careers that have been identified by DOLE's *Project Jobs Fit* as occupations expected to absorb more workers and create more employment opportunities in the industry up to 2020.

As long as people value their lives, there will always be work for massage therapists.



For therapeutic massage and wellness training, visit or contact **Hilot at Hilom Pilipinas Wellness Resource and Training Center**. HiHiP is a massage therapy licensure training institution duly accredited by the Department of Health.

DOH Licensure exams are held twice yearly on the first Sundays of June and December. Regular enrollment at HiHiP for the Licensure Course begins in July and January. Training classes begin August and February.

Tuition Discounts are available for groups of six (6) enrollees and above. Special training/review arrangements are available for advanced, experienced, or working enrollees.

HiHiP also has a **"Study now, pay as you work"** scholarship program for deserving students. **Three-year employment is guaranteed.** **APPLY NOW!** Tel 049.544.0704, Mobile 0917.545.7494, email parthia.hihip@gmail.com, or [visit us on FB](#).

DOH REQUIREMENTS: BioData, Certified True Copy of Birth Certificate (at least 18 years old at the time of the next DOH examination), Barangay Certificate of Good Moral Character, NBI Clearance, Medical Certificate attesting to absence of STD from government clinic, Certified True Copy of Diploma or Certificate of highest educational attainment, or Transcript of Record, Marriage Contract (for female married applicants), two passport size photographs taken within the last two months.

HiHiP reserves the right to screen applicants based on moral character and fitness for professional practice.

