
**Agriculture & Natural Resources
Committee**

ESSB 5403

Brief Description: Certifying animal massage practitioners.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Agriculture & Rural Economic Development (originally sponsored by Senators Rasmussen, Brandland and Jacobsen).

Brief Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill

- Requires certification by the Secretary of the Department of Health (Department) for an individual to practice as a certified animal massage practitioner, with certain exceptions.
- Prescribes the instructional and competency evaluation requirements for certification in large or small animal massage.
- Authorizes the Secretary to adopt rules, establish fees, approve education and training programs, approve or deny certifications.

Hearing Date: 3/21/07

Staff: Meg Van Schoorl (786-7105).

Background:

Veterinary Medicine: The practice of veterinary medicine is defined in statute to include a variety of activities such as: diagnosing animal diseases, deformities, defects, wounds, or injuries; prescribing or administering drugs or treatments; and performing operations, manipulations, or applications of any apparatus for the cure, amelioration, correction, or reduction of any animal disease, deformity, defect, wound, or injury. Education, training and examination requirements for licensing as a veterinarian are specified in statutes and rules of the Veterinary Board of Governors.

Human Massage: Massage practitioners in Washington must be licensed. The Washington State Board of Massage administers massage practitioner licensing and adopts rules regarding standards

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for educational programs, examination, and licensing. Licensing is required for performing or offering services incorporating terms or designations implying a massage technique or method, including but not limited to massage therapy, massage technology, myotherapy, therapeutic massage, or body therapy. To qualify for licensing as a massage practitioner, a person must be at least 18 years old, and have successfully completed (1) a course of study in an approved massage program or approved apprenticeship program; and (2) an examination administered or approved by the Washington State Board of Massage.

Animal Massage Practitioner Endorsement: In 2001, a bill was enacted authorizing a licensed massage practitioner to apply for an endorsement as a small or large animal massage practitioner. An "animal massage practitioner" is defined to mean a person licensed to practice massage therapy with additional training in animal therapy. Animal massage therapy does not include diagnosis, prognosis, or treatment of animal diseases, deformities, defects, wounds, or injuries. To apply for the endorsement, a licensed massage practitioner must have completed 100 hours of training in either large or small animal massage. This training must include animal massage techniques, kinesiology, anatomy, physiology, first aid care, and proper handling techniques. The Washington State Board of Massage is authorized to adopt rules for endorsement of licensed massage practitioners as small or large animal massage practitioners.

Summary of Bill:

The Legislature finds that while veterinarians and certain massage practitioners may perform animal massage techniques, meeting all the requirements of those professions may be unnecessarily cumbersome for individuals wishing to limit their practice to animal massage.

"Certified animal massage practitioner" is defined. Techniques that may be included as animal massage are specified. Activities that are not included as animal massage are also specified.

To practice as a certified animal massage practitioner, a person must be certified by the Secretary (Secretary) of the Department of Health (Department). To receive such certification, an individual must complete a Secretary-approved program including three hundred hours of specialized instruction, and complete a Secretary-approved competency evaluation in either large or small animal massage, or both.

- For a certificate to practice animal massage on large animals, the three hundred hours of specialized instruction must be related to performance of massage on large animals.
- For a certificate to practice animal massage on small animals, the three hundred hours must be related to performance of massage on small animals.
- For course work or training taken by an applicant in another state, the Secretary may determine its equivalency to the requirements of this chapter and whether additional course work or training is necessary prior to taking the competency examination.

The Secretary may adopt rules, establish certification and renewal fees, establish forms and procedures, certify or deny certification to an applicant, hire staff, maintain the official department record, approve education and training programs, and convene temporary advisory workgroups as necessary. Animal massage practitioners are added to the list of professions covered by the Uniform Disciplinary Act, administered by the Secretary.

This chapter does not prohibit or restrict:

- The practice of veterinary medicine; or

- The practice of animal massage by persons who have the additional endorsement under their human massage license; or
- The practice of animal massage therapy by a student under general supervision of an educational program instructor; or
- The use of animal massage techniques by the animal's owner, an owner's employee, or another person providing massage for free.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available on original bill. New fiscal note requested on engrossed substitute bill on March 20, 2007.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.