PUBLIC HEALTH, WELFARE & SAFETY

Exhibit No. 7

Date 4-6-09

Bill No. HB662

I have been asked to read this statement by Ruth Marion, who is the
> owner of Health Works Institute, Montana's only nationally accredited
> massage therapy school, located in Bozeman. The last name is spelled
> MARION. Ruth is not feeling well today, otherwise she would be reading
> this herself.
>
> I am sending my testimony on HB662 to ask that you vote yes on this
> important bill.
>
> I have been involved in massage therapy education since 1984. I am not
> a massage therapist. I have served as the executive director of the
> agency that accredits massage schools, and I have been involved with
> the development of the profession at state and national levels since
> 1990.
>
> Development is a very important concept in the dicussions that we are
> having today. Developments in the profession of massage therapy,
> including educational standards, practice standards, and credentialing
> processes, are ongoing. Right now, the American Massage Therapy
> Association has partnered with other groups within the profession to
> define the body of knowledge for the profession; that is, they are
> defining the skills and knowledge that massage therapists should
> possess. You may ask, hasn't this been done already? If 42 states
> already license massage therapists, why is this project underway now?
> The reality is that pieces of this project have been undertaken,
> especially over the past 15 years, yet there are still differences that
> need to be resolved. For example, to sit for the national certification
> exam, massage therapists need to have at least 500 hours of education,
> and the national certification board provides schools with a curriculum
> description on which the test is based. The Commission on Massage
> Therapy Accreditation, which is approved by the U.S. Department of
> Education, has a whole list of skills and areas of knowledge that must
> be in the curriculum of schools that want to be accredited. However, a
> massage therapist who wants to become nationally certified may also
> demonstrate eligibility for the test by submitting a portfolio
> documenting the "equivalent" of 500 hours of training. And the massage
> school accrediting agency requires 600 hours rather than the 500 hours
> that are required by the national certification board.
>
> The process that HB662 has gone through so far reflects the fact that
> the profession of massage therapy is continuing to be developed.
> HB662's process so far also reflects the fact that unity within this
> profession is a cause for celebration. Many states have experienced
> opposition to legislation from within the profession. That is due to
> the wonderful variety in the types of people involved in the profession
> and the wide range of approaches to providing measureable, important