

THE FLORIDA SENATE
2024 SUMMARY OF LEGISLATION PASSED
Committee on Health Policy

CS/CS/HB 197 — Health Care Practitioners and Massage Therapy

by Health Care Appropriations Subcommittee; Healthcare Regulation Subcommittee; and Rep. Lopez, V. and others (CS/SB 896 by Fiscal Policy Committee and Senator Martin)

The bill expands the Department of Health’s (DOH) authority to suspend the license of a massage therapist or massage establishment when an employee of the establishment is arrested for committing or attempting, soliciting, or conspiring to commit certain offenses, such as prostitution, kidnapping, or human trafficking. The bill authorizes the State Surgeon General to suspend the license of any licensee upon probable cause that the licensee has committed sexual misconduct.

The bill expressly prohibits sexual activity in a massage establishment and authorizes the DOH and law enforcement to investigate massage establishments for new required and prohibited acts to assist in identifying persons who may be engaging in human trafficking. The bill prohibits the use of a massage establishment, unless zoned residential under a local ordinance, as a principle or temporary domicile, a shelter or a harbor, or sleeping or napping quarters.

The bill requires DOH investigators to request valid government identifications from all employees, in addition to massage therapists, in a massage establishment at the time of inspection. If an employee is unable to provide a valid form of government identification, the bill requires the DOH to notify a federal immigration office.

The bill appropriates eight full-time equivalent positions and the sums of \$925,080 in recurring and \$108,952 in nonrecurring funds from the Medical Quality Assurance Trust Fund to the DOH for the purpose of implementing the bill.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor’s signature, the bill takes effect July 1, 2024.

Vote: Senate 38-0; House 118-0