Governor
Joe Lombardo

Executive Director
Elisabeth Barnard

Board Members
Chair – Rebecca Dorangricchia
Vice Chair – Paula Wilber
Secretary-Treasurer – Jenn Ty
Lorna Benedict
Alan Kite - Swinden
Rosemarie Mueller
Bill Schoen
John Teng
Reflexology Member - Vacant
LVMPD Advisory Member – Sergeant Brian Young

Nevada State Board of Massage Therapy

Advisory Opinion 2026-03

Rielynn Grace
[redacted]

Dear Ms. Grace,

Pursuant to Nevada Administrative Code ("NAC") 640C.530 to 640C.560, inclusive, you requested an advisory opinion from the Nevada State Board of Massage Therapy ("Board") regarding whether the services you intend to provide, specifically, "gentle scalp scratching, light fingertip tracing on the back, arms, or hands, feather-light touch, calming sensory touch intended for relaxation only," falls within the definition of "massage therapy" set forth in Nevada Revised Statute ("NRS") 640C.060. This letter sets forth the Board's decision regarding your question below.

You have specifically described your services as "gentle scalp scratching, light fingertip tracing on the back, arms, or hands, feather-light touch, calming sensory touch intended for relaxation only." You state that your services "do not involve muscle manipulation, deep tissue work, pressure-point therapy, effleurage, petrissage, tapotement, compressions, vibration, friction" and that it does not provide "therapeutic claims or medical diagnosis" As set forth in more detail below, the Board's decision is that, as presented, the services described do fall within the definition of "massage therapy" set forth in NRS 640C.060.

ANALYSIS

NRS 640C.060 defines "massage therapy" as:

> 1. "Massage therapy" means the application of a system of pressure to the muscular structure and soft tissues of the human body for therapeutic purposes, including, without limitation:
>
> (a) Effleurage;
> (b) Petrissage;
> (c) Tapotement;
> (d) Compressions;
> (e) Vibration;
> (f) Friction; and

(g) Movements applied manually with or without superficial heat, cold, water or lubricants for the purpose of maintaining good health and establishing and maintaining good physical condition.

2. The term does not include:

(a) Diagnosis, adjustment, mobilization or manipulation of any articulations of the body or spine; or

(b) The demonstration of a product on a person that applies a system of pressure to the muscular structure and soft tissues of the human body, provided that the demonstration is not longer than 2 minutes.

Under the rules of statutory construction, when a statute is clear and unambiguous a court will give the language its plain, everyday meaning. *California Commercial v. Amedeo Vegas I, Inc.*, 119 Nev. 143, 145 (2003). In this case, the Board has not further defined the terms "effleurage," "petrissage," "tapotement," "compressions," "vibrations," nor "friction," as such, we give each term its every day meaning.

The term "effleurage" is defined as "horizontal strokes applied with fingers, hand, or forearm that usually follow the fiber direction of the underlying muscle, fascial planes, or dermatome pattern." (Mosby's Fundamentals of Therapeutic Massage, Third Edition, 2004) Additionally, "effleurage" can also be defined as "the application of gliding movements that follow the contours of the body." (Susan Salvo, Massage Therapy Principles and Practice, 7th Edition, 2023) The term "petrissage" is defined as "kneading; rhythmic rolling, lifting, squeezing, and wringing of soft tissue." (Mosby's Fundamentals of Therapeutic Massage, Third Edition, 2004) Additionally, "petrissage" is defined as "massage technique involving compression, lifting or decompression, and the releasing of soft tissues such as skin and muscle." (Susan Salvo, Massage Therapy Principles and Practice, 7th Edition, 2023) The term "tapotement" is defined as "springy blows to the body at a fast rate to create rhythmic compression of the tissue." (Mosby's Fundamentals of Therapeutic Massage, Third Edition, 2004) Additionally, "tapotement" is defined as "massage technique that consists of repetitive striking movements." (Susan Salvo, Massage Therapy Principles and Practice, 7th Edition, 2023) The term "compression" is defined as "pressure into the body to spread tissue against underlying structures." (Mosby's Fundamentals of Therapeutic Massage, Third Edition, 2004) Additionally, "compression" is defined as "nongliding technique of pressure application." (Susan Salvo, Massage Therapy Principles and Practice, 7th Edition, 2023) The term "vibrations" is defined as "specific circular or transverse movements that do not glide on the skin and that are focused on the underlying tissue." (Mosby's Fundamentals of Therapeutic Massage, Third Edition, 2004) Additionally, "vibrations" is defined as "massage technique that uses shaking or trembling motions." (Susan Salvo, Massage Therapy Principles and Practice, 7th Edition, 2023) The term "friction" is defined as "fine or coarse tremulous movement that creates reflexive responses." (Mosby's Fundamentals of Therapeutic Massage, Third Edition, 2004) Additionally, "friction" is defined as "massage technique which involves rubbing one body surface against another while maintaining constant and equal pressure in all directions." (Susan Salvo, Massage Therapy Principles and Practice, 7th Edition, 2023)

The Board considered these definitions and determined that the services as presented meet the definition of "massage therapy" set forth in NRS 640C.060 because the services you provide meet the definition of effleurage.

CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion at the August 12, 2026, Board meeting, the Board issues this Advisory Opinion 2026-02, determining that the services intended to be provided by you as presented, specifically, the repetitive light scratching using fingertip nail extensions, soft tracing movements along the skin, meet the definition of "massage therapy" as set forth in NRS 640C.060 because the services meet the definition of effleurage.

Rebecca Dorangricchia, Chair