

Reiki Practice Fact Sheet

WHAT IS REIKI PRACTICE?

Reiki is a spiritual practice somewhat like meditation. People practice Reiki for well-being, to support self-healing, and because it aligns with their spiritual beliefs.

SAFETY

The National Institutes of Health NIH recognizes Reiki as a complementary health practice which can “help facilitate the person’s own healing response” and states “Reiki hasn’t been shown to have any harmful effects.” The National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health NCCIH is the NIH center tasked with researching the effectiveness and safety of complementary health products and practices. <https://www.nccih.nih.gov/health/reiki> accessed March 23, 2021

Proposed bills to date allow volunteers to practice Reiki without a license, an acknowledgment that the practice is not harmful.

DIVERSITY & ECONOMIC IMPACT

Reiki practice is not centralized; there is no governing board and no agreement on practice or educational standards. There are currently more than 200 known Reiki practice styles in the U.S. Each has a unique set of guidelines and traditions that morph with each practitioner, and without enough overlap to allow for standardization.

Reiki is historically taught by lay master teachers, mostly women, trained through oral tradition and personal practice. Reiki teachers typically teach in informal, non-academic settings such as living rooms and spiritual centers. Most Reiki students are female.

Reiki practice amounts to a grassroots spiritual cottage industry, again, mostly women. Regulations for Reiki teaching or practice would create a financial burden for many Reiki professionals. Some would be driven out of business. Those who can manage the finances would have to pass the fees on to the communities they serve, creating economic obstacles to self care.

The economic hurdles created by Reiki regulation feed systemic sexism and racism, being particularly burdensome to women and to people and communities of color, ironically those most open to informal spiritual home care.

Reiki professionals who cannot meet the added financial requirements of unnecessary regulation would become unemployed. Some are mothers supporting their families.

The use of complementary health practices by Americans is increasing, up from 34% in 1990 to 42% by 1997 <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK83794/> and 62% by 2004 <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/04news/adultsmedicine.htm>

The Obama White House issued a set of best practices for state policymakers to enact reforms to reduce the prevalence of unnecessary and overly broad occupational licenses.

President Donald Trump issued an executive order to curb occupational licensing. The purpose of the order is “to reduce the burden of occupational regulations in order to promote the free practice of commerce, lower consumer costs, and increase economic and geographic mobility.”

Licensing boards usually hold autonomy over rulemaking and are rarely subject to any oversight.

Individual state legislatures have begun reversing licensing laws for some occupations.

The patchwork of state-by-state licensing rules leads to dramatically different requirements for the same occupations depending on the state in which one lives.

The Council of Economic Advisers in its annual 2020 report estimated that occupational licensing serves as a hidden tax on consumers of between 3 to 16 percent, costing them up to \$203 billion dollars, and that these restrictions have resulted in up to 2.85 million fewer jobs nationwide.

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