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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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TDLR Closes Denton Massage Establishment For Suspected Human Trafficking

AUSTIN – The Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation (TDLR) has issued a six-month emergency closure order effective September 30, 2024, for a massage establishment in Denton for suspected human trafficking.

Tao Spa, 1005 W. University Dr., in Denton, and owner Xiaohang Chen, were ordered to stop operating this massage business and are prohibited from operating a different massage establishment at this location for six months. Tao Spa did not have the required TDLR massage establishment license.

In mid-September, TDLR inspectors and members of the Denton County Sheriff's Office conducted an onsite inspection of Tao Spa, where they found that neither employee onsite was licensed as a massage therapist. Both employees were dressed provocatively, and there was an ATM in the middle of the establishment. Investigators found online ads that advertised sexual services offered at the establishment.

[House Bill 3579](#), authored by state Representative Ben Bumgarner and passed by the 88th Texas Legislature, went into effect Sept. 1, 2023. Under the new law, TDLR's executive director can issue an emergency order halting the operation of any massage establishment if law enforcement or TDLR believes human trafficking is occurring at the establishment.

This order is the tenth emergency order issued by TDLR since the law went into effect, and the first to close an unlicensed massage establishment.

"Anyone operating a massage establishment in Texas that is not licensed as required should know that we at TDLR take seriously our responsibilities for protecting clients and employees of massage establishments. We will do what is necessary to make sure that establishments and employees are licensed and that establishments are operating in accordance with the law," said Courtney Arbour, TDLR executive director.

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Anyone who suspects human trafficking is occurring can contact the National Hotline for Human Trafficking at [1-888-373-7888](tel:1-888-373-7888) or text HELP or INFO to BeFree (233733). If the situation is an emergency or you believe someone is in immediate danger, call 911 and alert the authorities.

You can also [file a complaint](#) on a TDLR-regulated business that you suspect may be participating in human trafficking.

About TDLR

TDLR provides regulatory oversight for a broad range of occupations, businesses, facilities, and equipment in Texas. The agency protects the health and safety of Texans by ensuring they are served by qualified, licensed professionals. Inspections of individuals, businesses, and equipment are done on a regular basis to safeguard the public. Currently, the agency regulates 37 business and occupational licensing programs with almost 1,000,000 licensees across the state.

Visit TDLR's [website](#) for more information and resources. You can search the [TDLR licensee database](#), and also find [past violations](#) in which a final order was issued against companies or individuals. TDLR's Customer Service line is available anytime between 7 a.m. until 6 p.m., Monday through Friday, at 1-800-803-9202. TDLR representatives are fluent in English, Spanish and Vietnamese.

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