



Dora
Department of Regulatory Agencies

Division of Registrations Office of Barber and Cosmetology Licensure

January 2, 2009

Director's Position Statement #1

“Fish Pedicure” or “Fish Doctor” Procedure NOT permitted in Colorado

The Director for the Office of Barber and Cosmetology Licensure reviewed material related to the procedure known as “fish pedicure” or “doctor fish” and concluded that it is not to be permitted in Colorado until further notice.

A BRIEF DESCRIPTION:

A Fish pedicure is a procedure that involves having a type of Carp called Garra rufa or Doctor fish, nibble on the feet to remove dead skin. Garra rufa obtuse, aka "doctor fish," occur naturally in the waters of a hot spring near Kangal in Turkey's Sivas Province, and it was there that the fish's unique dietary habits were first discovered. Locals found that the fish would peck away at the dead and diseased skin of bathers, easing the symptoms of those suffering from skin conditions such as psoriasis (a chronic disorder that causes red, scaly patches on the skin) and abscesses.

Also known as lickers, nibble fish, Kangal fish, and reddish log suckers, doctor fish grow to 19 cm. Their bodies are covered in gold scales and they use their toothless, crescent-shaped mouths to nibble away dead skin softened by the Kangal spring's 37-38 degree water. If a bather suffers from an extreme skin ailment, the fish may eat so much that minor bleeding occurs, exposing the lesion to water and sunlight. The hot spring's water contains high levels of selenium, which helps heal wounds by protecting cells against free radicals excerpted from the Japan Times.

BASIS FOR DIRECTOR'S POSITION:

The fish pedicure procedure poses an undue risk to public health. The health and safety rules currently in place do not permit this procedure given that the fish and water are used on multiple customers and have the potential to transmit infectious disease. Additionally, the fish would not survive the cleaning and disinfection procedures in Rule 2, Cleaning and Disinfection.