

MESSAGE THERAPY REGULATION: WHAT ARE SOME BENEFITS TO THE PROFESSION?

What are some benefits of becoming regulated?

- **SELF-REGULATION THROUGH A MESSAGE THERAPY REGULATORY COLLEGE** – As the profession of massage therapy continues to grow and evolve, Manitoba massage therapists will regulate our own profession within the requirements of the Regulated Health Professions Act. In this, we will join the 14,000+ RMTs who are already regulated in Canada. Massage therapists are best suited to regulate our own profession because we have the necessary knowledge, skills, and judgement, and the ability to favour the best interest of our patients and the public. The public will also have a voice in regulatory decision making, through the Council of the Regulatory College.
- **PROFESSIONAL STATUS** – Massage therapists regularly work alongside regulated health professionals (e.g., physiotherapists and chiropractors), and many patients receive prescriptions or referrals for massage therapy from physicians and others. However, massage therapists are often not perceived to be on the same ‘level’ as other health professionals – either by the public or by other health professionals. Designating massage therapy as a regulated health profession will help to raise the status of the profession, and will help to educate the public and other health professionals about what massage therapists are actually able to do. There will be a much clearer distinction between therapeutic massage provided by competent RMTs versus “cosmetic massage” or other forms of “bodywork” that are not massage therapy. Regulating massage therapy should help to improve the level of respect for the profession, enhance the role of massage therapy as an important part of our health care system, and help facilitate increased collaboration / consultation with other health professionals.
- **TITLE PROTECTION** – The titles “massage therapist” and “registered massage therapist” (and perhaps other similar titles) will be reserved only for those who are eligible to register as an RMT with the Regulatory College. That means massage therapists will be clearly identified as health professionals and not lumped together with others such as bodyworkers or estheticians who may also provide some forms of massage but are not qualified massage therapists.
- **INSURANCE RECOGNITION** – Massage therapists who are registered with the new Regulatory College will be recognized as qualified massage therapy providers by all insurance companies. The Regulatory College will maintain an updated list of all registered therapists, and all insurance companies will use this registry list as their standard reference when processing massage therapy claims.
- **LABOUR MOBILITY / CREDENTIAL RECOGNITION** – RMTs who practice in a regulated jurisdiction will have labour mobility under the Federal Agreement on Internal Trade, meaning their credentials will be recognized by all other provinces (regulated or not). This will make moving and practicing in different provinces far easier than the current situation for Manitoba RMTs.
- **EDUCATION STANDARDS** – A Regulatory College will have input into the approval/registration of massage therapy diploma programs, and the recognition of their graduates as having the minimum education required to complete the provincial examinations for entry-to-practice. All schools that are registered and recognized by the Regulatory College will need to deliver a comprehensive curricula and quality assessment methods to ensure students acquire all the required practice competencies for new massage therapists. These practice competencies are consistent across all regulated provinces.