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## **Massage Therapists in Colorado Join Other Professions in Registration Process**

DENVER—June 4 2008—Colorado now joins 38 states, plus the District of Columbia, that currently regulate the practice of massage. Colorado consumers will now be guaranteed that the massage therapist they select is professional, reputable, has been adequately trained and educated to perform massage therapy in this state.

On April 7, 2008, Senator Chris Romer (D-District 32) introduced **Senate Bill 08-219**. House sponsors were Representatives Liane “Buffy” McFadyen (D-District 47) and Joe Rice (D-District 38).

After many years of work regarding this issue by members of the Colorado Coalition of Massage Therapists (CCMT), the bill passed. On June 2, 2008, Governor Ritter signed the bill into law. The Department of Regulatory Agencies (DORA) will be responsible for administering the registration process. This act shall take effect July 1, 2008 and will apply to the registration of massage therapists on or after April 1, 2009.

"I sponsored SB 219 as a matter of public safety and to protect the integrity of the massage profession," stated Representative Rice. "There are too many unscrupulous massage businesses that pose a risk to consumers as well as harm legitimate massage therapists. By working with consumer groups, massage therapists, law enforcement, and local governments, we were able to create a reasonable bill that regulates massage therapist in a way similar to that of other health professions."

When the bill was originally introduced in the Senate, it required that massage therapists practicing in the State of Colorado obtain a license in order to operate. The bill was revised in the House to require mandatory registration, rather than licensing. Many other occupations in Colorado currently require registration, including nurses, dietitians, dental hygienists and occupational therapists.

After April 1, 2009, massage therapists will need to meet the following requirements in order to register:

- Has at least five years of experience, and has completed at least 300 hours of massage training, OR

- Has attained a degree, diploma or otherwise successfully completed a massage therapy program that consists of at least 500 total hours of course work and clinical work from an approved massage school, OR
- Has passed a national exam:
  - The Massage and Body Work Licensing Examination offered by the Federation of State Massage Therapy Boards, or
  - A National Certification Examination offered by the National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork, or
  - Any other examination as approved by DORA.

In addition, all applicants must complete an application including fee, and pass a criminal history record check conducted by the Colorado Bureau of Investigation.

Beginning in 2010, all applicants must have 500 hours of education from an accredited massage therapy program, pass a national exam, and have a criminal history record check.

Only a person registered under this bill as a massage therapist may use the titles “massage therapist,” “registered massage therapist,” “massage practitioner,” “masseur,” “masseuse,” the letters “M.T.” or “R.M.T.,” or any other generally accepted terms, letters or figures that indicate that the person is a massage therapist. SB08-219 also provides a definition of scope of practice, an avenue for consumer complaints and preemption of local ordinances currently in effect. In addition, it requires that a massage therapist carry professional liability insurance, in the amount of not less than \$50,000 per claim and an aggregate liability limit for all claims during a year of \$300,000.

Persons excluded from this registration include:

- Students enrolled in a massage therapy program at an approved massage therapy school,
- A person employed by the U.S. Government or any federal government entity while acting in the course and scope of such employment,
- A person who is temporarily in the state who is administering massage therapy to a professional or amateur sports organization, dance troupe or other such organization,
- A person who is volunteering to provide massage therapy at a public athletic event including Olympic Games, Special Olympics, Youth Olympics or marathons,
- A person who is part of an emergency response team and is providing massage therapy as part of a disaster response effort,
- A person who is providing massage therapy to members of their immediate family,
- A person who provides alternative methods that employ contact and does not hold himself or herself out as a massage therapist, and is providing treatments including the Feldenkrais Method, the Trager Approach, Body-Mind centering, Reiki, Shiatsu, Asian or polarity bodywork, Rolfing, Hellerwork, and Muscle Activation Techniques.

Penalties for not registering range from a cease-and-desist to restraining orders to misdemeanor charges.

In 1991, the Colorado Coalition of Massage Therapists (CCMT) was formed to work with government officials in drafting an equitable, enforceable, and inclusive regulation, which

protects the name, the profession, and the public, with the ultimate goal of state regulation. The Colorado Chapter of the American Massage Therapy Association (AMTA) is a member of CCMT.

For more information, contact Kathryn Stewart, AMTA-CO Government Relations Co-Chair at 303-425-7298 or vimarsha@aol.com.

For more information on CCMT, visit [www.ccmtb.org](http://www.ccmtb.org).

#### **About AMTA**

The Colorado Chapter of the American Massage Therapy Association has nearly 1,700 members throughout Colorado. The chapter is dedicated to furthering the professionalism of the massage therapy field and educating consumers on the benefits and use of massage in maintaining active and healthy lifestyles. For more information on the chapter, visit [www.amtacolorado.org](http://www.amtacolorado.org).

The American Massage Therapy Association is a non-profit, professional association with more than 57,000 members throughout the United States and in some 27 other countries. The association is directed by volunteer leadership chosen through its national election and fosters ongoing, direct-member-involvement through its 51 chapters. The association also helps consumers and healthcare professionals locate professional massage therapists nationwide, through AMTA's Find a Massage Therapist® free national locator service available at [www.findamassagetherapist.org](http://www.findamassagetherapist.org) or toll-free at 888-843-2682 [888-THE-AMTA].

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