



**CANADIAN MASSAGE & MANUAL OSTEOPATHIC THERAPISTS ASSOCIATION**

# **Scope of Practice**

## **For Massage Therapists**

Authorized Activities within Professional Practice

Second Edition Adopted July 29, 2019

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## **PREFACE**

### **Definition**

A scope of practice highlights the professional activities permissible by respective legislation and/or education skills and training certifications. It provides an external boundary within which graduates of the profession work.

### **Introduction**

This Scope of Practice document is developed for Massage Therapists with the basic level of training and certification. It is to be used in conjunction with Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics for quality assurance in the practice of Massage Therapy. The authors of this document recognize the overlapping roles between Registered Massage Therapists and other Alternative Health Practitioners and therefore have included a list of activities **restricted** under the Alberta Health Professions Act (2000).

A scope of practice statement creates public awareness in the choice of a suitable health care provider for their health care needs. It also assists Registered Massage Therapists (RMT) distinguish between modalities that lie within their scope of practice and those which do not.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this Scope of Practice document is to:

- Provide a summary of authorized professional activities for CMMOTA members registered as massage therapists;

- Provide new and prospective graduates of Massage Therapy Schools entry-to-practice margins;

- Set a framework upon which CMMOTA Massage Therapy Members can maintain their identity as massage therapy professionals;

- Encourage sound-logic and evidence-based approaches to guide care provided under an RMT;

- Provide CMMOTA RMT members a benchmark to maintain good standing with the Association and the Insurance Industry;

- Provide CMMOTA a parameter by which to initiate a complaints investigation process and implement a disciplinary action where applicable.

### **Acknowledgements**

Special thanks to the Canadian Council for Massage Therapy Schools for provision of the Massage Therapists Pledge and the Federation of Massage Therapy Regulatory Authorities of Canada for the 2016 Entry-to-Practice Inter-Jurisdictional Practice Competencies and Performance Indicators for Massage Therapists which defines the Scope of Intervention for Massage Therapists.

### **Liability Statement**

In addition to this document, Registered Massage Therapists are accountable to all applicable pieces of legislation, Association Bylaws, Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics documents.

## GLOSSARY

**Client:** The person receiving Massage Treatment from a qualified Massage Therapist.

**Registered Massage Therapist:** An individual that has graduated from an approved and licensed program and has become a registered member of the Canadian Massage and Manual Osteopathic Therapist Association (CMMOTA).

**Massage Treatment:** This is the therapeutic intervention provided by a qualified Registered Massage Therapist or Massage Therapist in training.

**Restricted Activity:** An action that is legally impermissible and/or unethical and/or immoral and/or unauthorized for the Registered Massage Therapist to perform on a client due to inadequate training/skills/education and certification.<sup>2</sup>

**Scope:** Entry-level activity the Registered Massage Therapist is trained and certified to competently perform after graduation.<sup>3</sup>

## Summary of Scope of Practice

From a physiological perspective, this is what is permissible for CMMOTA RMT members:

- Any hands-on techniques (that are not protected acts) performed under the intent of the CMMOTA Scope of Practice for Massage Therapist.
- Remedial Modalities as outlined and approved in the CMMOTA definition of Massage Therapy.
- Client education to mitigate pain and improve function by altering tissue loading. For example:
  - ❖ Suggesting that an office worker with low back pain get up and move around periodically throughout their workday;
  - ❖ Educating clients of factors influencing their pain, for better understanding and further take steps toward self-care.

## Summary of Restricted Activities

This scope of practice restricts CMMOTA Massage Therapy members from performing the following activities:

1. Prescribing/administering medications.
2. Providing diagnoses.
3. Puncture of the dermis.
4. Performing all forms of psychotherapy.
5. Performing restricted activities and modalities NOT approved or defined as Massage Therapy and billing them under Massage Therapy.
6. Commenting and reporting on areas outside of massage therapy including but not limited to client's mental, social, financial and nutritional health except ONLY when the client **asks** for a referral.
7. Inserting body parts or equipment into the anus, vagina or urethra and massage of the penis or testicles.
8. Initiation or pursuit of personal romantic relationship(s) with client(s) within six months of the last treatment with the RMT.

# 1. Client Interaction

## Scope

The Registered Massage Therapist:

- Communicates professionally with the client
- Applies principles of beneficence and non-maleficence when working with clients
- Respects the client's right to refuse treatment
- Treats all clients fairly and impartially
- Maintains privacy and confidentiality of client information
- Provides the client with all the options pertaining to the Massage Therapy Session, including the potential benefits and side effects
- Invites the client to attend treatment sessions
- Creates a safe environment for the client to fully disclose their health history
- Seeks informed consent from the client before performing any activity within this scope of practice document
- Reports to relevant authority or encourages reporting when there is evidence and admission of abuse on a client
- Reasonably charges the client for services rendered
- Withholds the right to refuse to provide Massage Treatments if safety of the client and/or the therapist is compromised
- Discloses to the client their level of training/certification and licensure

## Restricted Activities

The Registered Massage Therapist shall not:

1. Refer to themselves as any other protected title under any Health Professions Act;
2. Encourage, initiate or maintain a sexually intimate relationship with an existing client; except when legally married or in a common law relationship;
3. Encourage, initiate or maintain behavior of non-therapeutic nature;
4. Misrepresent their qualifications to members of the public.

## 2. Technical Skills

### Scope

The Registered Massage Therapist,

- Performs full body physical examinations, assessments and re-evaluations on clients as per the Standards of Practice document<sup>4</sup>
- Partners with the client to develop an appropriate Massage Therapy Treatment Plan
- Implements treatment techniques as outlined in the Standards of Practice Document and the Inter-Jurisdictional Practice Competencies and Performance Indicator for Entry-to-Practice Massage Therapists<sup>4</sup>
- Effectively manages time in the workplace
- Provides a progress report when requested
- Refers the client out to more experienced professionals when the complexity of the client care exceeds their expertise or when there is a high risk of a negative outcome in response to a therapeutic intervention or whenever is suitable<sup>4</sup>

### Restricted Activities

The Registered Massage Therapist shall not:

1. Perform any activity restricted in any Health Professions Act;
2. Perform treatment on a client without seeking and obtaining informed consent;
3. Perform a therapeutic intervention to intentionally harm the client;
4. Perform High Velocity Low Amplitude Thrusts on a client;
5. Diagnose a condition presented by a client;
6. Issue a requisition to a client for a diagnostic test;
7. Perform a technique on a client without having the skill, education, training and certification;
8. Puncture the dermis of the client in the course of treatment;
9. Perform intra-anal, intra-penile and/or intra-vaginal treatments on a client.



### **3. Research**

#### **Scope**

The Registered Massage Therapist,

- Performs research activities limited to the Standards of Practice, Code of Ethics and Scope of Practice Documents
- Employs ethical, morally sound and lawful methods of recruiting participants
- Seeks and obtains informed consent from every participant in the study
- Accurately reports/documents the findings and any other data relevant to the research
- Avoids plagiarism
- Cites referenced sources accurately and comprehensively

#### **Restricted Activities**

The Registered Massage Therapist shall not perform any unethical and/or illegal research methods.

## 4. Teaching and Mentorship

### Scope

The Registered Massage Therapist:

- Educates when they show evidence of competence in Massage Therapy Skills
- As an Educator meets the Educator requirements as listed by the relevant employment organization and in absence of that, the Provincial Ministry of Private Vocational Training/Advanced Education Department
- Mentors budding therapists within the boundaries of the Standards of Practice, Scope of Practice and Code of Ethics documents

### Restricted Activities

The Registered Massage Therapist shall not teach and/or mentor student therapists in activities outside of their training, qualifications, skills and certifications.

## **5. Leadership and Resource Management**

### **Scope**

The Registered Massage Therapist:

- Performs cost-benefit analyses of their health care business and service to clients
- Applies quality assurance and quality control measures in the provision of services to the client including but not limited to therapeutic interventions and administrative tasks
- Monitors resource provision to clients
- Fairly allocates resources such as time, finances and intellectual wealth to clients and staff
- Prioritizes and budgets for task completion

### **Restricted Activities**

The Registered Massage Therapist shall:

1. Comply with any Provincial and Federal Government legislations, Human Rights Commissions and Labor laws regarding health and safety and employment standards;
2. Provide a workplace free of verbal or conduct harassment or discrimination due to disability, sexual orientation, gender, race, religion, country of origin, ethnic descent, family, appearance, color, age, criminal history, medical history, marital status etc.

## REFERENCES

1. Federation of Massage Therapy Regulatory Authorities of Canada. 2016. Inter-Jurisdictional Practice Competencies and Performance Indicators for Massage Therapists at Entry-to-Practice.
2. Alberta Queen's Printer. 2000. Province of Alberta, Health Professions Act. Revised Statutes of Alberta (Chapter H-7).
3. College of Registered Nurses of Manitoba and College of Registered Psychiatric Nurses of Manitoba. 2010. Understanding Scope of Practice for Licensed Practical Nurses Registered Nurses Registered Psychiatric Nurses in the Province of Manitoba.
4. Canadian Massage and Manual Osteopathic Therapists Association. 2019. Standards of Practice: Massage Therapy, Guidelines for Best Practice, Second Edition.