



Massage Therapist Update – Winter 2019

Over the last year our Board of Directors has seen a change of personnel. We thank those who are no longer members of the Transitional Council for their contribution to the cause of seeing Regulation become a reality in the province of Alberta.

The Transitional Council for the College of Massage Therapists of Alberta's Board of Directors has nine representatives, three from each member association: The Canadian Massage and Manual Osteopathic Therapists Association (CMMOTA[note: RMTA has changed its name to CMMOTA]), the Massage Therapists Association of Alberta (MTAA) and the Natural Health Practitioners of Canada (NHPC).

The current members of the Transitional Council for the College of Massage Therapists of Alberta Board of Directors is as follows:

Christy Kasur (NHPC) – President
Jessica Villeneuve (MTAA) – Vice President
Meagan Dick (CMMOTA) – Secretary
Melanie Hayden (NHPC) – Treasurer
Heather Goddard (CMMOTA) – Director
Gina Hendrickson (MTAA) – Director
Kathy Watson (NHPC) – Director
Jeremy Sayer (CMMOTA) – Director
Jason Dvorak (MTAA) – Director

The Board of Directors is a cohesive team of experienced, knowledgeable and dedicated professionals. Each member is fully committed to the application process and shares the same values including transparency, accountability, fiscal and financial responsibility, and looking forward to ongoing communications with the profession, the government and other key stakeholders.

TC-CMTA - A Brief History

For those who do not know, or have forgotten since the last update to massage therapists, we will provide a brief history of the process thus far in moving the Massage Therapy profession forward towards regulation in the Province of Alberta:

In the past numerous attempts at bringing regulation to the table were made starting as early as 1990. Along the way there were multiple stops and starts for various reasons. In 2008, the three associations that now comprise the Transitional Council of Massage Therapy were contacted by Fred Horne, the then Minister of Health and Wellness, indicating his recommendation that therapeutic massage therapists work together toward the regulation



of Massage Therapists. The Minister tasked those three organizations with the mandate of coming up with a joint application and gave them recommendations. The minister said that unless we were prepared to work out our differences, he would not support regulation.

In 2014, the founding members of the Transitional Council for the College of Massage Therapy, being the NHPC, The MTAA and RMTA (now CMMOTA), concluded that it was time to put past issues behind them and work together to move regulation forward in Alberta. This led to a survey in 2015 open to all massage therapists, to gauge support for the regulation within Alberta. What followed was a joint application, prepared by the three associations, which was presented to the Alberta Health Department staff in June of 2016. The TC-CMTA Board of Directors was then informed by the Associate Minister of Health, Brandy Payne, that we had "approval in principle" for the application. This meant that Government administrative staff had the go ahead to move forward with the regulation application.

Recent Developments

In the Spring of 2018, the Transitional Council received a letter from Assistant Deputy Minister Leann Wagner, written on behalf of Minister Hoffman informing the TC-CMTA that "Alberta Health is currently in possession of two competing applications for the regulation of massage therapy, which is a concern for the department. The previous government indicated a willingness to regulate massage therapists under the HPA, however, this willingness was dependent on massage therapists demonstrating that they are self-governable. To do so, the massage therapy associations in Alberta must cooperate and display unity as a profession. With competing applications, Alberta Health is unable to move the regulation of the profession forward at this time."

Following the election in April of 2019, TC-CMTA Board of Directors contacted the new Minister of Health, Tyler Shandro, congratulating him on his election win, and subsequent appointment to his new role. In the same letter we asked the Minister for a meeting to discuss the regulation of massage therapy under the Health Professions Act.

In July he responded via letter with similar language saying: "I am also aware that the Ministry has received applications for the regulation of massage therapists from two different organizations wishing to be the regulatory body. Self-regulation under the HPA requires collaboration within a profession. As such, I urge the Transitional Council to work with the other organizations that share an interest in regulating massage therapists."



What is the TC-CMTA Board of Directors currently working on?

With this information in mind we are currently working on three different fronts. The first of these is to continue our conversations with the Government regarding regulation with a united voice on behalf of the three organizations, and to continue preparing the documents that were previously requested as part of the preparation for regulation requested by ministry staff. As requested by Minister Shandro, the TC-CMTA Board of Directors will also be seeking a meeting with a member of his staff in the new year.

Second, the TC-CMTA Board of Directors continues to work vigilantly to maintain and improve communication and collaboration with the organization which has submitted the competing application. We have been in communication with them, and we look forward to an in-person meeting in the new year as well to further discuss how we can work together to move regulation forward in Alberta.

Third, and finally, the TC-CMTA Board of Directors continues to advocate for the regulation of massage therapy by seeking and gaining support from other key stakeholders in Alberta, such as the major cities and other municipalities, and law enforcement. It is imperative that our profession maintains continuous support from outside sources as well as the associations and their memberships. Working with key stakeholders offers an opportunity for the TC-CMTA Board of Directors to put before the government the urgency for regulation of the massage profession and see if we can use that as a mechanism to move the government towards identifying the need to regulate the profession now and move forward.

How long until we see Regulation?

We wish that we had an answer for this question, because we know that you as massage therapists are getting tired of hearing 3 to 5 years. This is the reality, as much as we can put all the right pieces in place to be ready for regulation to happen in Alberta, the decision to regulate ultimately solely belongs to the Provincial Government of Alberta. To that end we continue to do those things which the Government of Alberta have asked us to do to be ready for the day when the legislation is finally introduced on the floor of the Legislature. Our hope is that we will soon be joined by the other association in our quest for regulation. Until that happens, we will continue to be the united voice of the three member associations to the Government of Alberta on behalf of the massage therapists practicing in Alberta for as long as it takes.