



ADVOCATE FOR MASSAGE THERAPY AS A RECOGNIZED AND RESPECTED HEALTHCARE PROFESSION

**Date:** February 21, 2020

**To:** WSMTA Board of Directors and Members

**From:** Marybeth Berney, LMT, WSMTA President, Board Member, Government Relations Program Member  
(mberney@mywsmta.org)

**Re:** February 21, 2020 Board of Massage (BOM) Meeting Notes

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**School Program Reviews:** Therapeutic Connections -- approved, Discoverypoint -- approved, Spectrum -- approved

**Rules Update and Discussion:** For the most current round of Rule writing a CR101 was filed that opened 13 sections of massage WACs. During the work on these 13 sections the BOM also did some work on an addition 5 sections.

The BOM was informed that because these 5 sections had not been included in the CR101 these sections could not move forward. In order to expedite the forward movement of the other 13 sections, the BOM decided to set aside these 5 sections and return to them after the original 13 are completed.

The sections that will be worked on later include WAC 246-830-201 Examination, WAC 246-830-485 Somatic education training program exemption, WAC 246-830-490 Intraoral massage education, WAC 246-830-500 Equipment and sanitation, WAC 246-830-510 Hygiene.

Most of the changes to these 5 sections were just clean-up/clarification of language, with only 1 or 2 words that were added/changed. The exception to this is the Equipment and sanitation WAC. **Please take note: For now, blankets will continue to be classified as a single service linen.**

**Public Comment:** Those that commented thanked the BOM for their transparency and hard work during the Rule writing process.

**Open Public Meeting Act (OPMA):** With 2 new members the BOM received training in the OPMA from their legal counsel.

**Collaboration with the Center for Public Affairs (C4PA):** C4PA is a service office within the DOH. They help with government relations/policy development, communication, health promotion and health education and community relation and health equity. The BOM is collaborating with C4PA to help solve the problem of a 52% failure rate with audits of LMT continuing education.

Each month the BOM audits 2% of those LMTs (35-40 LMTs) that attested to their CE requirements. 52% of those folks fail the audit, meaning they cannot prove that they have adequate CEs to be in compliance. These LMTs receive a Notice of Correction and are given 60 days to respond. Failure to respond to the Notice of Correction and correct the deficiency leads to a Statement of Charges that is issued against the LMTs. Even at the second follow-up LMTs still have a 29% failure rate. Of all the health professions that require continuing education, LMTs make up 27% of the failed audits. This is NOT something that we want to be famous for! These failed audits are a huge cost to the massage program and are a part of what is driving up our licensing

fees.

The project goal with C4PA is to conduct formative audience assessments to better understand real and perceived barriers to LMTs in WA meeting their CE requirements. So far, a literature review has showed that our CE requirements are not out of line with other states. Next, C4PA will be reaching out to focus groups in Seattle, Spokane and other places to gather more specific practitioner data. They will then be able to advise the BOM as to steps that might help to mitigate this problem and help control costs to the program and LMTs.

**Elections:** The BOM held elections to re-elect Heidi Williams, LMT as Chair and to elect Autumn Straker, LMT as Vice Chair.

**2020 Meeting Locations:**

- June 5, 2020 (date change) – This meeting will be held in conjunction with the Rules hearing
- Aug 21, 2020 -- Tri-Cities or Teleconference (will be decided at June meeting)
- Nov 13, 2020 – Kent or Teleconference (will be decided at June meeting)

**Newsletter:** The BOM Newsletter will be changing format (no longer sent as a pdf file) and will be sent in a mobile friendly format. This will allow the BOM to gather “click data”.

**Budget:** The BOM is already seeing some improvements in the budget with the fee increase that went into effect October of 2019.

**HELMS Update:** The predicted costs to be allocated to the Massage Program for the new licensing data base is \$43,000 the 1<sup>st</sup> year, \$174,000 the 2<sup>nd</sup> years, \$183,000 the 3<sup>rd</sup> year and \$91,000 the 4<sup>th</sup> year. These costs can be spread out over the Massage Program's budget for 6 years.

**Board Member Recruitment Update:** There is still one position open on the Board for Public Member. The staff informed us that most of the Boards and Commissions have difficulty filling the Public Member position. They asked that if any of us have clients/patients that we think would be valuable board members to encourage them to apply.

**Credentialing Report:** There are currently 13,679 active LMTs, 292 in pending status and 159 just expired.

After the meeting had adjourned the WSMTA Government Relations Program team asked for some additional clarification on the costs to the Massage Program for Unlicensed Practice. While there certainly is cost to the program for unlicensed practice it is not one of the larger cost drivers. One of the largest cost drivers is complaints against LMTs. This tracks with what other health professions are seeing, a growing number of complaints against licensed health providers. In 2019 there were 13,000 complaints against licensed health providers in WA. Massage ranks at #5 according to the UDA report through 2018.