



In Touch

An Official Publication of the Alabama Board of Massage Therapy

Alabama Board of Massage Therapy

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WE'RE ON THE WEB!

www.almtbd.alabama.gov

Winter 2011

Comments from the Chair

Michael S. Stephens (LMT #989)

My name is Michael Stephens, a massage therapist, and currently serving as Chairman of the Alabama Board of Massage Therapy. I was born in the beautiful town of Anniston, Alabama and raised in Montgomery. I have worked in this field since 2000 and opened *At Ease Massage Therapy* in 2001. I enjoy the work and the positive feedback I receive from many of my clients. Being appointed to the Board is a true honor to me. The position gives me perspective into the responsibilities of the Massage Board toward ensuring that the high standard of qualifications is met by schools and therapists. Together, the therapists and the Board need to work as ONE so we can do what is best for the public of Alabama and also the licensed therapists.

I would like to touch on something which is vital to our profession. There are many elements important to the integrity of the massage field. Issues such as ethics, professionalism, timing of massage, and type of therapy are some of these elements. To me, just as important, is a hard work ethic. We work in a white collar environment, but it is a blue collar job.

Most clientele need a good, strong level of sustained pressure in order to improve their well being. They should have satisfactory improvement beginning right after the session and thereafter. It takes a precise level of pressure to get into the muscle belly where lactic acid can build up. This lactic acid will prevent the good flow of circulation from occurring. Hindrance of circulation will increase soreness of the muscle and decrease the ability of muscle to function at its fullest. To reach the correct level of pressure on clients, some therapists will have to work harder than others depending on strength. It is not fair, but it is necessary.

I believe that not having the work ethic is the greatest reason that clients do not return to massage. In fact, a good massage will keep clients coming back again. We are laborers, and there should not be any misconception about it. To be therapeutic, we have to work hard enough to bring positive and beneficial change to their bodies.

Massage is the missing link in good health for those that have a hard working therapist. How can you expect the client to come back if you do not give good hard effort the first time? So, be sure to check with your client after the first couple of minutes about the pressure level. Ask them to let you know if you will need to increase or decrease the pressure throughout the session. This will help you get it right, to get repeat business, and hopefully get your name out to others. If we collectively work hard in our profession, it will strengthen the integrity of massage therapy.

Newsletter—Electronic Version

To receive the next issue of this newsletter, please send us your e-mail address. All future issues will be sent electronically. Please send us your name, license number and e-mail address by

FAX (334) 263-6115 or E-MAIL : massagetherapy@warrenandco.com.

IF you have moved, you are required to submit a "Change of Address" form notifying this office of the change!

(Change of Address form can be obtained on the Board's website)

Becoming Involved in YOUR Business!

When I chose to begin my career as a massage therapist, I honestly did not think I would be in the profession for a long time, or even full time. I finished massage therapy school in 1999. The driving factor behind my study of massage therapy was to help people find ways to alleviate pain without taking so many medications. The techniques I learned in massage school, and the continuing education classes I have taken, to help others in ways I never expected.

Through the past 11 years, I have been blessed with many rewards in my profession. My client base is stable and growing; the choices I have made to be in practice for myself have been rewarding; and watching my profession grow has been a joy. But, as with any growth process, there are always some challenges and hidden surprises (a.k.a. "growing pains").

Before being invited to serve on the Alabama Board of Massage Therapy, I was not as aware of what was happening in our profession on a state or national level. I was upset that certain local laws were passed or presented for vote that I did not feel would benefit massage

therapists in Alabama. Upon reflection, I realized that I had no right to be upset with anyone but myself for not being more involved with the direction my profession was going, outside of my own practice.

As a new member of the Alabama Board of Massage Therapy, I now have a better picture of what direction my profession is taking in Alabama and in the nation. I want to invite all massage therapists to become more involved in helping protect and advance this rewarding profession. I encourage you to attend board meetings, to familiarize yourself with what is (or will be) affecting you and your business, and to become more aware of and involved with your associations (ABMP and AMTA). These groups are the best way to keep yourself informed and to help better understand the direction your profession is taking.

To contact the Alabama Board of Massage Therapy, to present issues for discussion to address concerns, please call Keith Warren at (334)269-9990. Also, please be aware that all board meeting dates and minutes from past meetings are posted at www.almtbd.alabama.gov.

Janet Gwen Motley (LMT #681), Board Member

Licensed Professionals

Hello all! I am writing this today to ask you to do something that you might find uncomfortable. This is report anyone you know who is working as a massage therapist without a license. I know that you may not want to, but unlicensed individuals are bringing down the profession that we all know and love. You worked very hard to learn your trade and by allowing someone to come in and work without the license, is having a negative effect on the profession as a whole. You may have a friend that has just finished massage school that "needs to make some money to pay for the national exam." If they are portraying themselves to the public as a massage therapist then they are breaking the law. I implore you to notify the Board, by completing a *Consumer Complaint* form (available on the Board's website, www.almtbd.alabama.gov) and let us know who, what, when, and where these people are performing these "massages." Your state investigator would be more than happy to look into this claim.

Another thing to consider is unlicensed practitioners do not know all of the contraindications to massage that you know. This could lead to them hurting someone that you know and love. They will not be covered by insurance if they do harm someone. Also, if a client receives a bad or inappropriate massage, then they will talk negatively about massage therapists, making other potential clients wary of us when they need services. How many massage clients have you had that came in talking about a bad MT experience? I personally, have heard too many stories.

This professional trade has come a long way and as a member of the Board, we want to see it progress even higher, as I am sure that you would also. We are working hard to make this vocation grow. If you allow something that you know is wrong to go on then you are not allowing this profession, your profession, to grow, or for us to help. Only if we work together can we make strides toward bettering your career. *Submitted by Lance Gilliland (LMT #1135), Board Member*

Advertising Requirements

DID YOU KNOW there was a requirement for advertisements by massage therapist or establishments to contain the appropriate license number? In Section 34-43-16, *Code of Ala. 1975, ...*"Any advertisement by a massage therapist or establishment shall contain the number of the therapist or establishment." Including your license number on advertisements is required by law but it is also a helpful tool to the public to see that you are licensed and legitimate.

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FSMTB ANNUAL MEETING 2010

Puerto Rico (October 7-9, 2010)

Some points of interest discussed at the meeting:

1. Nationwide task force to be formed between the FSMTB and law enforcement agencies to battle human trafficking and the sex trade business.
2. The FSMTB considering establishing a database of all approved massage therapy schools (If someone is educated in one state and travels to another state, then their board can look at this website to see if this school is accredited).
3. Massage therapy education is not equal in every state. Some schools only conduct review class prior to students taking the national exam. Nothing else is taught there.
4. Palm reading technology under consideration by Pearson VUE, replacing fingerprinting technology. The new technology is ten times more accurate than fingerprinting. [This will cut down on people taking the test for one another.]
5. Unlicensed massage practitioners continue to be a problem in most states.
6. Human trafficking and sex trade business continue to be a problem in most states.
7. The definition of massage was an issue that haunts some states.
8. Continuing education hour requirements reduced in

some states and hands-on components have been required from other states.

9. Reporting the pass/fail scores of the MBLEx to the states and schools is very similar to what the NCBTMB does now.
10. The issue of having a full online massage therapy education was not well received. Some states would not even allow a business class online.; every aspect of the student's education had to be done at the institution.
11. The issue of having different requirements for education, specifically, the number of required hours for graduation. This issue was an Open Forum discussion.

Submitted by Lance Gilliland (MT #1135), Vice Chair , Alabama Board of Massage Therapy

Lance Gilliland has been a Certified Athletic Trainer since 1998 and a Licensed Massage Therapist since 2001. He is in his fourth year as an instructor at Gadsden State Community College where he teaches Therapeutic Massage classes and more recently Athletic Training classes. He holds a Masters Degree in Education from Jacksonville State University as well as degrees from the University of Alabama at Birmingham and Wallace State Community College. He first got into massage therapy to supplement his profession of athletic training, but has been utilizing what he has learned on a daily basis since then. Lance resides in Heflin, Alabama with his wife, child, and three old dogs.

Advertising Requirements

(continued from Page 2)

It's a reminder to the public that a license is required to perform these services and allows them an opportunity to research you on the Board's web site to see if there has been any disciplinary action against you. The more we promote licensure of massage therapists and establishments, the **more awareness** of unlicensed individuals and businesses people will notice with the possibility of complaints being submitted to the Board. The compliance of laws takes not only the licensure Board, but the licensees and the public's assistance as well.

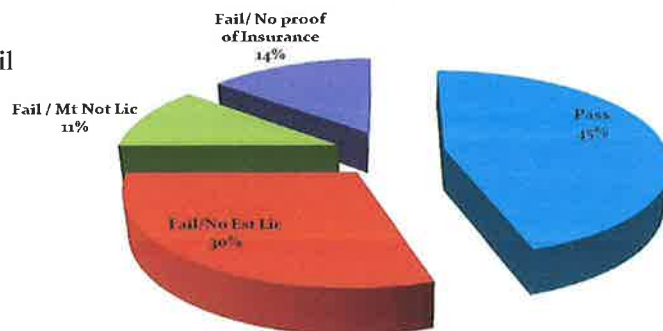
Massage Therapy Establishment License

~ Initial Inspections:

As depicted in the chart, over 50% of **Establishments** fail their initial inspection conducted during the first several months of 2011. To successfully pass an inspection, please insure the following:

1. All Massage Therapist (MT's) are properly licensed; must have a current license from the ABMT.
2. All MT's must have proof of liability insurance.
3. Obtain an Establishment license one (1) per geographical location.

2011 Inspections



Executive Director Notes

I hope this publication finds you well. The Board continues to be quite active with licensure applications for massage therapists and establishments. This is good news, particularly during these stressful economic conditions we are experiencing. The Board has recently revised the rules and regulations with repealing some antiquated language to assist in making these documents more up-to-date and easier for everyone to navigate. The Board, again this year, has legislation pending to clean up the statute, eliminating antiquated language dating back to 1996 when the original law was passed by the Legislature. The most important portion of this legislation is the amendment to the examination portion to allow the Board to review and approve any examination for therapeutic massage and bodywork and not be legally tied to only accept one examination for licensure. This is a restriction of trade and desperately needs to be repealed. There are other changes to the pending legislation and you can read the bill in its entirety on the Board's web site (www.almtbd.alabama.gov). We are also initiating online renewals for massage therapists and establishments which will also be available on the Board's web site and the state's web site as well (www.alabama.gov). We continue to conduct over 100 establishment inspections throughout the year and are also initiating the inspections of massage therapy schools this year as well. I have a new member of my staff that will be assisting the Board of Massage Therapy, Mr. Nick Vonderau. You can see a listing of all staff members and our contact information on the web site as well. Please do not hesitate to contact any of us if we can be of assistance to you.

Keith E. Warren, Executive Director



2012 Board Meetings

Meetings are held at 10:00 A.M.
2777 Zelda Road
Montgomery, AL 36106
(334) 420-7233
www.almtbd.alabama.gov

January 20, 2012
February 24, 2012
April 13, 2012
June 15, 2012
July 20, 2012
August 17, 2012
October 12, 2012
December 14, 2012

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