

**VIRGINIA BOARD OF NURSING
ADVISORY BOARD ON MASSAGE THERAPY**

Wednesday, October 30, at 10:00 A.M.
Department of Health Professions
9960 Mayland Drive, Suite 201
Henrico, VA 23233
Training Room 1

Agenda

- I. Call to Order: Dawn Hogue, L.M.T., Chair
- II. Establishment of a Quorum
- III. Announcements
 - A. New Advisory Board Member: Candice Merrick, B.C.T.M.B., L.M.T.
 - B. Claire Morris, L.N.H.A., R.N., started on September 1, 2024, as Executive Director of the Board of Nursing.
 - C. Jessica Long started on August 12, 2024, in the position of part-time Licensing Specialist for Massage Therapy.
- IV. Old Business
 - A. Review and approval of minutes from December 15, 2023, meeting.
 - B. IMpact Model Legislation Update: Ms. Bargdill
- V. Public Comment/Open Forum
- VI. New Business
 - A. Election of Officers: Ms. Hogue
 - B. January to June 2025 Informal Conference and Formal Hearing Schedules: Ms. Bargdill
 - C. FSMTB CE Registry
 - D. Review of Guidance Document 90-47
 - E. Environmental Scan
- VII. Reports
 - A. L.M.T. Licensure Report: Ms. Bargdill
 - B. L.M.T. Discipline Case Report: Ms. Bargdill
 - C. 2024 FSMTB Massage Board Executive Summit, April 4-5, 2024, Savannah, GA: Ms. Bargdill
 - D. 2024 FSMTB Annual Meeting, October 3-5, 2024, Washington, DC: Ms. Stoll

Our mission is to ensure safe and competent patient care by licensing health professionals, enforcing standards of practice, and providing information to health care practitioners and the public.

VIII. Information Only (No Action Required)

- A. IMpact Intentions and Clarifying Examples, Debra Persinger, September 6, 2024
- B. Instant On-Screen Exam Results, August 1, 2024
- C. FSMTB Annual Report

IX. Discussion for Future Meetings

X. Adjournment of Meeting

Our mission is to ensure safe and competent patient care by licensing health professionals, enforcing standards of practice, and providing information to health care practitioners and the public.

*Prepared by: Candis Stoll
10282024*

**VIRGINIA BOARD OF NURSING
ADVISORY BOARD ON MASSAGE THERAPY
MINUTES**

Friday, December 15, 2023

TIME AND PLACE: The meeting of the of the Massage Therapy Advisory Board convened at 10:00 a.m. in Board Room 3, Department of Health Professions, Perimeter Center, 9960 Mayland Drive, Suite 201, Henrico, Virginia.

PRESIDING: Dawn Hogue, L.M.T., Vice Chair

MEMBERS PRESENT: Maria Mercedes Olivieri, L.M.T.
Annie Lively, L.M.T.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Shawnté Peterson, L.M.T., Chair
P. Lisa Speller, R.N., B.S.N., M.S., Citizen Member

STAFF PARTICIPATING: Jay P. Douglas, R.N., M.S.M., C.S.A.C., F.R.E., Executive Director
Christina Bargdill, B.S.N., M.H.S., R.N.
Candis Stoll, Senior Discipline & Licensing Specialist

PUBLIC PARTICIPATING: Becky Bowers-Lanier, American Massage Therapy Association (AMTA)-VA Chapter
Christopher Kenyon, L.M.T.

ESTABLISHMENT OF A QUORUM: Ms. Hogue welcomed attendees and asked Ms. Stoll to take a roll call of Massage Therapy Advisory Board Members present. With three (3) members present, a quorum was established.

Staff and public attendees were identified.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Ms. Bargdill announced that Annie Lively, L.M.T., was appointed to the Advisory Board on Massage Therapy and that Ms. Peterson was re-appointed for a second term. Then, Ms. Bargdill announced that Candis Stoll started on July 10, 2023, as full-time Senior Licensing and Discipline Specialist, for the LMT, RMA and CNA programs, and Andrea Lewis started on June 19, 2023, as part-time Licensing Specialist for Massage Therapy.

OLD BUSINESS: The minutes from the Advisory Board of Massage Therapy meeting, held on November 9, 2022, were reviewed. There were no edits or corrections made to the minutes. Ms. Olivieri made a motion to accept the minutes. The motion was seconded by Ms. Lively and carried unanimously.

Ms. Bargdill provided an update on the Interstate Massage Compact (Impact) and the model legislation that each state must enact to join the compact. In order for the

compact to be established, a total of seven states must enact the legislation. The most up-to-date information on Impact and the model legislation can be found on the FSMTB website.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Ms. Hogue opened the meeting for public comment at 10:36 a.m. Ms. Bowers-Lanier addressed the Advisory Board on AMTA's current position on the model legislation and the Interstate Massage Therapy Compact.

NEW BUSINESS: Ms. Hogue announced that according to the By-laws, elections for both Chair and Vice-Chair must be held. Ms. Peterson is currently serving as Chair, and Ms. Hogue is serving as Vice-Chair. Both have served two consecutive terms each in their respective offices and therefore are ineligible to serve for another term, in accordance with the By-laws.

Ms. Olivieri moved to nominate herself to serve as Chair. The motion was seconded by Ms. Lively and carried unanimously. Ms. Olivieri then rescinded her nomination. Ms. Hogue moved to nominate herself as Chair and the motion was seconded by Ms. Lively. With no other nominees for Chair, Ms. Hogue was elected to Chair by acclamation.

Ms. Hogue moved to nominate Ms. Peterson to serve as Vice-Chair. The motion was seconded by Ms. Lively and carried unanimously. With no other nominees for Vice Chair, Ms. Peterson was elected to Vice Chair by acclamation.

Ms. Douglas reviewed the Formal Hearing schedule for January – December 2024, as well as Informal Conferences scheduled for January – June 2024. Advisory Board members will be polled so that they can provide their availability for Formal Hearings for 2024.

Comments related to current trends and issues in the massage therapy education and practice environments included a discussion on the U.S. Department of Education (D.O.E.) Title IV funding eligibility. D.O.E has revoked the 150% rule related to Title IV funding eligibility. The potential negative implications this could have on massage therapy candidates and schools was discussed.

REPORTS: Ms. Bargdill presented the L.M.T. Licensure Report. The number of L.M.T. licenses issued this year is on track with the number of licenses issued in 2022.

Ms. Bargdill presented the L.M.T. Discipline Report. There was a significant increase in discipline cases in comparison with previous years. This increase is primarily related to reporting of fraudulent massage therapy education resulting in the invalidation of the MBLEX exam results. Statistical reports provided are available in the agenda materials.

Ms. Bargdill attended and submitted a written report for the 2023 FSMTB Massage Board Executive Summit. She noted that this year the summit included an educational track for investigators. DHP Senior Investigator Kim Lynch attended the conference and participated in the programming available for investigators.

Ms. Hogue attended the 2023 FSMTB Annual Meeting and gave a verbal report. Topics from this meeting included sexual harassment of massage therapists by clients and the upcoming policy where massage therapy applicants must finish their course of instruction before applying to take the MBLEX.

INFORMATION ONLY: FSMTB Annual Report, October 2023
Combatting Massage licensing Fraud: How Traffickers Exploit Gaps in Education Oversight
Commonwealth of Virginia, the Commission on Human Trafficking Prevention and Survivor Support Final Report, January
Department of Education Revokes 150% Rule for Title IV Funding Eligibility, October 2023, and Fact Sheet.

DISCUSSION OF FUTURE MEETINGS: Board staff will start polling members of the Advisory Board on Massage Therapy in June 2024 for availability for meeting in the fall of 2024.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 11:34 a.m.



Christina Bargdill, B.S.N., M.H.S., R.N.
Deputy Executive Director

BYLAWS**THE ADVISORY BOARD ON MASSAGE THERAPY
VIRGINIA BOARD OF NURSING****Article I - Members of the Advisory Board**

The appointments and limitations of service of the members shall be in accordance with Section 54.1-3029.1 of the Code of Virginia.

Article II - Officers

Section 1. Titles of Officers - The officers of the advisory board shall consist of a chairman and a vice-chairman elected by the advisory board. The Deputy Executive Director of the Board of Nursing shall serve in an advisory capacity.

Section 2. Terms of Office - The chairman and the vice-chairman shall serve for a one-year term and may not serve for more than two consecutive terms in each office. The election of officers shall take place at the first meeting after July 1, and officers shall assume their duties immediately thereafter.

Section 3. Duties of Officers.

a. Chairman

- (1) The chairman shall preside at all meetings when present, make such suggestions as he may deem calculated to promote and facilitate its work, and discharge all other duties pertaining by law or by resolution of the advisory board. The chairman shall preserve order and conduct all proceedings according to and by parliamentary rules and demand conformity thereto on the part of the members.
- (2) The chairman shall appoint members of all committees as needed.
- (3) The chairman shall act as liaison between the advisory board and the Board of Nursing on matters pertaining to certification, discipline, legislation and regulation of massage therapy.

b. Vice-Chairman

The vice-chairman shall preside at meetings in the absence of the chairman and shall take over the other duties of the chairman as may be made necessary by the absence of the chairman.

Article III - Meetings

Section 1. There shall be at least one meeting each year in order to elect the chairman and vice-chairman and to conduct such business as may be deemed necessary by the advisory board.

Section 2. Quorum - Three members shall constitute a quorum for transacting business.

Section 3. Order of the Agenda - The order of the agenda may be changed at any meeting by a majority vote.

Article IV - Amendments

Amendments to these bylaws may be proposed by presenting the amendments in writing to all advisory board members prior to any scheduled advisory board meeting. If the proposed amendment receives a majority vote of the members present at that regular meeting, it shall be presented for consideration and vote to the Board of Nursing at its next regular meeting.

**INFORMAL CONFERENCE
LMT Advisory Board Availability
January – June 2025**

	Feb 10	Apr 7	June 9
Dawn Hogue			
Annie Lively			
Shawnté Peterson			
Candice Merrick			

[Learn more](#)



VME Schedule

A Virtual Membership Event will not be held in September. We look forward to seeing you in person at the Annual Meeting in October. The VME schedule will resume in November.

Department of Veterans Affairs: Massage Therapy Standards of Practice

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is developing a national standard of practice for massage therapists employed by the VA's healthcare system to ensure consistent standards of care across all VA healthcare facilities. This means massage therapy professionals will be expected to perform the same task and duties regardless of which state they are in. The standards enforced by the VA will preempt any state laws, rules or regulations that conflict with the task and duties authorized by the VA's national standards of practice.



VA | U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

The VA is requesting input from the profession to develop these standards. To provide public comment, follow the link below. The public comment period is open until September 30, 2024.

[Submit a public comment](#)



Has Your State Regulatory Board Approved CE Registry as a Recognized CE Provider?

Please contact gr@fsmtb.org for information about your state accepting CE Registry for license renewal.

Important Dates

September 16-19: [CLEAR Annual Educational Conference](#) (Baltimore, MD)

September 19-21: [FARB Innovation and Regulation Conference](#) (Atlanta, GA)

October 3-5: [FSMTB Annual Meeting of the Delegate Assembly](#) (Washington, DC)

7:20

98



To provide public comment, follow the link below. The public comment period is open [until September 30, 2024](#).

[Submit a public comment](#)



CE RegistryTM
CONTINUING EDUCATION REGISTRY

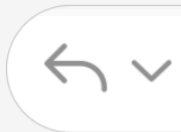
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 **Reply**



Mail



Calendar



Apps



Virginia Board of Nursing

Guidance on Massage Therapy Practice

Documentation of Training and Education:

If modalities of bodywork and specialized massage are incorporated into massage therapy practice, the Board of Nursing recommends that the Licensed Massage Therapist (LMT) maintain documentation of education and/or training in that area.

Appropriate Draping and Technique:

Areas that should be draped and not touched unless medically indicated for a condition referred by a physician, nurse practitioner or physician assistant and with the written informed consent of the client include: Anus, penis, testicles, scrotum, vagina, labia, clitoris, breast, nipples, and areola.

Consent:

Signed parental consent is recommended for massage therapy clients under the age of 18 years.

County/City Requirements:

A LMT should be knowledgeable about local/city requirements in which they practice.

Practice of Massage Therapy and use of title “massage therapist”:

Pursuant to § 54.1-3000 of the Code of Virginia:

A “massage therapist” means a person who meets the qualifications specified in this chapter and who is currently licensed by the Board.

The practice of "Massage therapy" means the treatment of soft tissues for therapeutic purposes by the application of massage and bodywork techniques based on the manipulation or application of pressure to the muscular structure or soft tissues of the human body. The term "massage therapy" does not include the diagnosis or treatment of illness or disease or any service or procedure for which a license to practice medicine, nursing, midwifery, chiropractic, physical therapy, occupational therapy, acupuncture, athletic training, or podiatry is required by law or any service described in § 54.1-3001(18).

According to § 54.1-3008, it shall be a Class 1 misdemeanor for any person to:

Engage in the practice of massage therapy or hold himself out as practicing massage therapy unless he holds a license as a massage therapist issued by the Board.



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 (804) 367-4515 phone
 E-mail: massagetherapy@dhp.virginia.gov

Massage Advisory Board Members
 (Revised October 21, 2024)

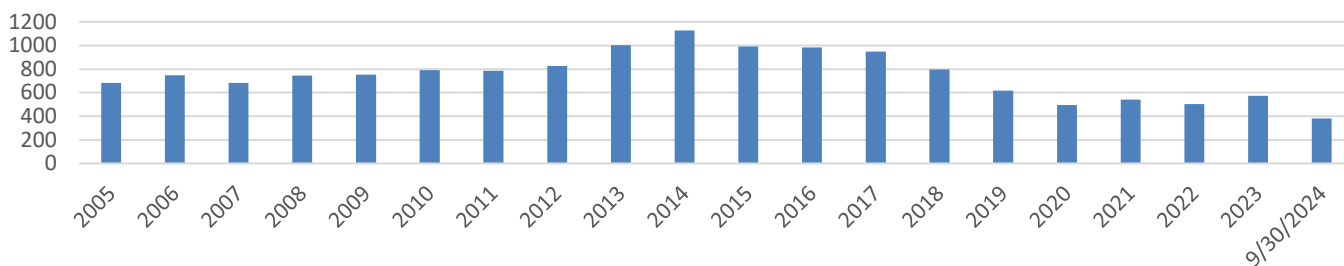
NAME:	TERM EXPIRES:
Dawn M. Hogue, MA, LMT, Chair, Virginia Beach	2024
P. Lisabeth Speller, RN, BSN, MS, Citizen Member, Glen Allen	2025
Ann Lively, MSW, LMT, Richmond	2027
Shawnté Peterson, LMT, Vice Chair, Chesapeake	2027
Candice Merrick, LMT, Chester	2028

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Number of new Massage Licenses **Issued** (Initial Applicants and Endorsements)

2024 (Jan 1- Sept 30)	382
2023 (Jan 1- Dec 31)	574
2022 (Jan 1- Dec 31)	503
2021 (Jan 1- Dec 31)	541
2020 (Jan 1- Dec 31)	494
2019 (Jan 1- Dec 31)	616
2018 (Jan 1- Dec 31)	796
2017 (Jan 1- Dec 31)	947
2016 (Jan 1- Dec 31)	984
2015 (Jan 1- Dec 31)	992
2014 (Jan 1- Dec 31)	1,126
2013 (Jan 1- Dec 31)	1,001
2012 (Jan 1- Dec 31)	827
2011 (Jan 1- Dec 31)	784
2010 (Jan 1- Dec 31)	790
2009 (Jan 1- Dec 31)	754
2008 (Jan 1- Dec 31)	744
2007 (Jan 1- Dec 31)	683
2006 (Jan 1- Dec 31)	748
2005 (Jan 1- Dec 31)	683

New LMT Licenses Issued



MBLEX was accepted as exam for certification in Virginia as of July 1, 2013

Total # of massage therapist **currently** active in Virginia as of **October 28, 2024: 8,285**

Online Massage Applications Received

	By Application	By Endorsement	Total
2024 (Jan 1 – Sept 30)	308	74	382
2023 (Jan 1 – Dec 31)	445	129	574
2022 (Jan 1 – Dec 31)	404	175	579
2021 (Jan 1 – Dec 31)	410	153	563
2020 (Jan 1 – Dec 31)	376	147	523
2019 (Jan 1 – Dec 31)	504	195	699
2018 (Jan 1 – Dec 31)	564	227	791
2017 (Jan 1 – Dec 31)	747	205	952
2016 (Jan 1 – Dec 31)	839	255	1,094
2015 (Jan 1 – Dec 31)	766	210	976
2014 (April 1 -Dec 31)	450	156	606

- The Virginia Board of Nursing started accepting massage applications online as of April 2014
- Implementation of Licensure for Massage Therapist effective January 1, 2017 (*from Certified Massage Therapist-CMT to Licensed Massage Therapist-LMT*)
- Pursuant to Virginia Code 54.1-3005.1, the Virginia Board of Nursing incorporated both state and federal criminal background checks as part of the application process for Massage Therapist effective January 1, 2017. This requirement applies to applicants by initial application, endorsement, and reinstatement.
- Effective April 16, 2020, the Board of Nursing no longer provides official verification for licensees wishing to obtain out-of-state licensure. Licensees are directed to License Lookup.
- Effective September 30, 2020, pursuant to Virginia Code 54.1-3029, the Virginia Board of Nursing clarified the requirement for applicants to have **completed** a massage therapy program that is at least 500 hours and requires a Board-approved English-proficiency exam for applicants educated outside of the United States.

LMT Total Count Payments Received	10/01/22 to 09/30/23	10/01/2023 to 09/30/2024
New Applications (initial & endorsement- paper & online)	656	617
Duplicate License Request	218	225
Duplicate Wall Certificate Request	37	48
Verification Requests ¹	3	1
Reinstatement Applications after Discipline	2	5
Reinstatement Applications	63	78
Renewals	3,466	3,630
Late Renewals	362	464

¹ Effective April 16, 2020, requests for verification are directed to License Lookup. Fees received were money order payments.



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Arne W. Owens
Director

Department of Health Professions

Perimeter Center
9960 Mayland Drive, Suite 300
Henrico, Virginia 23233-1463

www.dhp.virginia.gov
PHONE (804) 367-4400

Virginia Board of Nursing
Jay P. Douglas, MSM, RN, CSAC, FRE
Executive Director

Board of Nursing (804) 367-4515
www.dhp.virginia.gov/Boards/Nursing

MEMO

To: Board Members

From: Christina Bargdill, RN, BSN, MHS
Deputy Executive Director

Re: Federation of State Massage Therapy Boards Executive Summit

Date: July 2, 2024

I attended the 2024 Federation of State Massage Therapy Boards (FSMTB) Executive Summit which was held April 3 – April 5, 2024 in Savannah, Georgia. The focus of the Executive Summit this year was on engagement and interaction between member Boards. Sessions included both panel discussions and presentations to foster movement towards uniformity and standardization of licensure activities across member Boards. Topics and takeaways from the meeting are detailed below.

Panel Discussion: Importance of and Need for Licensing Standardization and Uniformity facilitated by Christina Bargdill (VA) focused on exploring the feasibility and value of identifying common regulatory requirements and practices that cause variability in licensure processes and what elements of licensure and practice could be more uniform across jurisdictions. The group used the 2011 NCSBN Uniform Licensure Requirements document as an example of a process used by member organizations to consolidate thoughts and identify areas of agreement.

Presentation: Interstate Massage Compact (IMpact) Industry Panel and Myth Busting facilitated by Patty Glenn (FSMTB) included presentations by Industry Representative; Samantha Nance, Esq., Embry Merritt Womack Nance, PLLC to discuss the Interstate Massage Therapy Compact. Focus was on the benefits of participating in the licensing compact and to correct

misconceptions about the compact. To date only Nevada has passed legislation to join the compact. Seven states must pass legislation to join the compact to establish the compact.

Presentation: FSMTB Programs, Services and Resources Overview provided by FSMTB Board Members Liz Barnard (NV), Keith Warren (AL), Adrienne Price (GA) targeted a review of the resources available to FSMTB member organizations.

Presentation: Future of Regulation- Part 1: Cultural and Societal Context Professor W. Keith Campbell, University of Georgia provided a review of his research on generational differences and discussed the impact of covid, and how other recent events are shaping today's workforce and the regulatory environment.

Presentation: Future of Regulation- Part 2: Developing Strategies provided by Debra Persinger (FSMTB) highlighted FSMTB strategic initiatives, FSMTB's core values and the most pressing regulatory issues facing the profession.

Presentation: Operation Nightingale and Fraud in Education Eddie Calienes, Special Agent with the United States Department of Health and Human Services, OIG provided an overview of the investigations that identified the fraudulent nursing educational programs operating in Florida which grew into the multi-jurisdictional effort known as Operational Nightingale. Mr. Calienes provided examples of fraudulent transcripts and other documentation and practices that are relevant to the evaluation of educational documents for massage therapist applicants.

Presentation: The State of Massage Education – Identifying the Issues provided by Kevin Snedden (FSMTB) highlighted several emerging issues in massage therapy education, in addition to the concern about fraudulent programs and transcripts, to include program approvals without onsite visits, the recent DoE final rulemaking revoking the 150% rule impacting eligibility for financial aid, and a general increase in requests for offering testing in other languages and for accommodation for testing.

A Brainstorming session pertaining to The State of Massage Education was facilitated by Patty Glenn (FSMTB) and Mai Lin Petrine (FSMTB) to identify potential solutions to ensure the security and accessibility of the MBLEX exam.

Impact Intentions and Clarifying Examples

 fsmtb.org/2024/09/06/impact-intentions-and-clarifying-examples/

September 6, 2024

Debra Persinger / 06 September 2024

FSMTB supports efforts to establish compatible requirements and cooperative procedures for the legal regulation of massage therapists in order to facilitate professional mobility and to simplify and standardize the licensing process. The Interstate Massage Compact (IMpact) provides an effective path towards meeting this goal.

Recently, AMTA and FSMTB met to discuss concerns pertaining to IMpact, leading to clarifications and intentions outlined in the joint letter below. The AMTA Board will further discuss the IMpact at its upcoming meeting on September 9-10 in Tampa, FL. FSMTB will continue to update our community as we continue these important conversations.



The Federation of State Massage Therapy Boards (FSMTB) represents the interests of state regulatory boards and agencies in protecting the public. The American Massage Therapy Association (AMTA) represents the interests of its members and the massage therapy profession overall.

The Council of State Governments (CSG) partnered with the Department of Defense (DoD) and FSMTB to support the mobility of licensed massage therapists through development of the Interstate Massage Compact (IMpact). AMTA and FSMTB are currently fielding questions about IMpact from many massage therapists. While all the answers are not yet known, we provide the following so that massage therapists can make informed decisions about IMpact.

IMpact Commission Composition & Authority

Although the IMpact legislation provides broad statutory language, an IMpact Commission will be formed to develop the specific rules and regulations governing massage therapists' ability to get a Multistate license. Because the IMpact Commission is not yet formed, it is unclear what the Commission would accept or allow.

What we know is that the IMpact Commission will be made up of the same people who oversee the existing state massage licensing boards and will likely be a subset of FSMTB members. Based on the IMpact development process and recommendations from subject matter experts, we are conveying the intention of the IMpact language in two key areas: education and licensing examination.

Examples of Qualifying Education

IMpact language Article 4.A.2.: To qualify for a Multistate License under this Compact, and to maintain eligibility for such a license, an applicant must: Have completed at least six hundred and twenty-five (625) clock hours of Massage Therapy education or the substantial equivalent which the Commission may approve by Rule.

For a State: The regulatory requirement for a State to be able to participate in the IMpact is that the State requires massage therapy education. The topics covered and the number of hours that the state requires is not specified. What matters is that initial and continuing massage education must be required for a massage therapist to get and maintain a massage license in a participating State.

For a massage therapist: What matters for the massage therapist is that the individual LMT (i) must be licensed in a State that is participating in IMpact and (ii) must have at least 625 hours of massage education. The average entry-level massage education program offered in the United States today is in excess of the 625 hour requirement. We also know that some LMTs graduated from a massage therapy education program with less than 625 hours and that others were able to bypass education hours requirements adopted by their state after they started practicing ("grandfathered").

The language in Article 4.A.2 that says "or the substantial equivalent" is intended to allow the IMpact Commission to include and accommodate LMTs whose core massage education was less than 625 hours, with the intention that the core education can be supplemented with continuing education.

Example 1: If you went to a 500-hour massage program, you would need to provide proof that you have completed 125 hours of continuing education to meet the 625 hours of education requirement, even if you have been a practicing massage therapist for 5, 10, 20 or more years, before qualifying for a Multistate license.

Example 2: If you went to a 600-hour massage program, and you have not completed any continuing education but you have been in practice for several years, you still would need to provide proof that you have completed 25 additional hours of education to meet the 625 hours of education requirement before qualifying for a Multistate license.

Examples of Qualifying Licensing Examination

IMpact language Article 4.A.3.: *To qualify for a Multistate License under this Compact, and to maintain eligibility for such a license, an applicant must: Have passed a National Licensing Examination or the substantial equivalent which the Commission may approve by Rule.*

For a massage therapist, the fact that a particular examination is not specifically named in the IMpact statutory language is intentional.* Article 2.U. defines a National Licensing Examination as a national exam developed by a national association of Massage Therapy regulatory boards, and the exam meets testing and security standards. The current licensing examination adopted by the majority of states for entry into the profession is the Massage & Bodywork Licensing Examination (MBLEx), which satisfies the National Licensing Examination definition. However, we know that many LMTs took an exam for licensure before the MBLEx existed or before their State adopted the MBLEx.

The language in Article 4.A.3 that says “or the substantial equivalent” is intended to allow the IMpact Commission to include and accommodate LMTs who may have taken a different national exam in the past, such as those offered by the National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork (NCBTMB). In all cases, the state in which you are licensed must have adopted IMpact.

Example 1: If you went to massage school and then took the NESL, NCETM, or NCETMB offered by the NCBTMB for licensure, then under the provision of “or the substantial equivalent” you would be eligible for the Multistate License without taking another exam.

Example 2: If you went to massage school and did *not* take a national exam but were licensed in one of the following ways, you would *not* meet the “or the substantial equivalent” requirement:

- You took a state practical exam to become licensed
- You took a state exam for licensure
- You were licensed by your state based on years in practice and did not take an exam
- You were grandfathered into licensure

In each case, your only options would be to (i) avoid the IMpact and apply for each state license individually or (ii) take the MBLEx or a substantial equivalent to be eligible for the Multistate License.

*Note that the regulatory requirement for a State to be able to participate in the IMpact is that the State must accept passage of the MBLEx for licensure.



FSMTB[®]
FEDERATION OF STATE
MASSAGE THERAPY BOARDS



Instant On-Screen Exam Results! Starting August 1st, if you achieve a passing MBLEx score, a congratulatory message will be displayed immediately on the screen. Say goodbye to the wait and the printout hassle. Get ready to know your results instantly!

All News & Updates
August 08



FSMTB[®]
FEDERATION OF STATE
MASSAGE THERAPY BOARDS

Annual Report

October 2024

Message *from the* President



I am proud to lead our organization through another year of positive change and growth. The hard work and innovative spirit of our dedicated team of staff and volunteers has enabled us to deliver on desired outcomes and introduce new standards in our industry.

Together, we have navigated inevitable challenges and seized opportunities, reinforcing our commitment to excellence, public protection, and community impact. As we look to the future, I am confident that our shared vision and ongoing dedication will continue to propel us forward, creating lasting value for all our stakeholders.

Thank you for your interest and support of the vital work of the massage regulatory community.

Craig Knowles, LMT
President

FSMTB BOARD OF DIRECTORS



CRAIG KNOWLES, LMT
President
Chair, Georgia Board of
Massage Therapy



CAROLINE GUERIN, LMT
Vice President
Presiding Officer of the Texas
Massage Therapy Advisory Board



ELISABETH BARNARD, LMT
Treasurer
Executive Director of the Nevada State
Board of Massage Therapy



FOAD ARAINEJAD, LMT
Director
Alabama Board of Massage Therapy
(former)



VICTORIA DRAGO, LMT
Director
Board Member of the Florida Board
of Massage Therapy



KAREN FRAZIER, LMT
Director
Vice Chair of the Kentucky Board of
Licensure for Massage Therapy



ROBERT RUARK
Director
Executive Director of the Oregon
Board of Massage Therapy



DEBRA PERSINGER, PHD, CAE
Executive Director

Communications

FSMTB responds to an average of 5,000+ phone calls and emails each month.

WEBSITE

The FSMTB website, fsmtb.org, remains the foremost resource for individuals seeking information about FSMTB and the MBLEx. During the past year, the website hosted over 171,000 visitors.

69,633
License Lookup
Web Page Visits

32,932
Calls

28,739
Emails

174,012
Home Web Page Visits

53,466
MBLEx Application
Web Page Visits

SOCIAL MEDIA

FSMTB shares organizational news and regulatory information via its social media presence. Across all platforms, we had 11,634 followers.



FSMTB



Federation of State
Massage Therapy Boards



@connectwithFSMTB



@thefsmtb

Events We Attended

Throughout the year, FSMTB travels to represent our Member Boards and agencies that regulate the massage therapy profession, while also gathering best practices to better support their work. These efforts help us maintain the high standards of the Massage & Bodywork Licensing Examination (MBLEX®) and further enhance FSMTB programs.

Whether attending national conferences, regulatory meetings, or collaborating with other organizations, our goal is to ensure the voice of massage therapy regulators is heard and that shared insights strengthen the regulation of the profession.

While this is not a comprehensive list of our engagements, it showcases key events where FSMTB proudly served as your representative.

IL

Federation of Associations of Regulatory Boards (FARB) Regulatory Law Seminar
September 23

TX

Federation of Associations of Regulatory Boards (FARB) Forum On Professional Regulation
January 24

CA

The Association of Test Publishers (ATP) Innovations in Testing Conference
March 24

TN

Massage Envy Annual Performance Summit
March 24

GA

FSMTB Massage Board Executive Summit
April 24

DC

ABMP School Summit
April 24

AZ

International Spa Association (ISPA) Convention
April 24

AZ

RISS Western Region Human Trafficking Summit
April 24

TX

Massage Therapy Coalition
June 24

PA

University of Pennsylvania Executive Education Program - Regulatory Analysis & Decision Making
June 24

MO

Alliance for Massage Therapy Education (AFMTE) Congress
July 24

FL

Florida State Massage Therapy Association Annual Conference
July 24

KY

National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) Legislative Summit
August 24

OH

American Society of Association Executives (ASAE) annual meeting
August 24

FL

American Massage Therapy Association (AMTA) National Convention
September 23

EVC



The Education Verification Center (EVC) supports more than **1,300 EVC users** representing over **930 state-approved massage therapy schools**

School Outreach

FSMTB hosted a pre-conference school information session for Florida schools prior to the 2024 session Florida State Massage Therapy Association (FSMTA) Convention.

FSMTB hosted a pre-conference school information session for schools in New York, Connecticut, and New Jersey prior to the New York State Society of Medical Massage Therapist (NYSSMMT) 2024 Symposium.

FSMTB presented at the Texas Administrators of Continuing Education (TACE) Annual Conference.

FSMTB supported the Alliance for Massage Therapy Education (AFMTE) Educational Congress.

FSMTB participated in virtual and live massage therapy profession events for schools in Arizona, Idaho, Oregon, South Dakota, Texas, and Washington.

MBLEx[®]

FSMTB's flagship program, the Massage & Bodywork Licensing Examination (MBLEx) was developed by the profession, for the profession, to meet the needs of the regulatory community as a requisite component of the licensure process.

The exam is psychometrically sound and legally defensible, and is designed to measure the entry level competence of new professionals with the safety of the consuming public at its core. The exam program continues to benefit from dedicated subject matter experts who volunteer their time to write content, staff and testing experts who put hours into the development process, and Member Boards who insist on using a licensing exam that is a product of integrity in design and implementation. FSMTB continues to work with Member Boards and agencies, as well as law enforcement, to protect the exam and, in turn, the licensure process.

MBLEx TESTING ACCOMMODATIONS

The FSMTB provides testing accommodations for qualified candidates with diagnosed disabilities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. The costs for providing testing accommodations are covered entirely by FSMTB.

The nature of the disabilities for which the accommodations were provided included ADHD, learning disabilities, dyslexia, visual/hearing impairments, and mental health conditions.

MBLEx Pass Rates*



17,742 MBLEx candidates tested
First-time pass rate **70%**

**July 2023 - June 2024*

Testing Accommodations



FSMTB supported MBLEx candidates with **603** testing accommodations



MBLEx CANDIDATE HANDBOOK

The current edition of the Massage & Bodywork Licensing Examination Candidate Handbook is available electronically at fsmtb.org.

The MBLEx Candidate Handbook is the primary source of information for applicants and educational institutions. It contains comprehensive details about eligibility criteria, application processes, fees, scheduling, FSMTB candidate support, study materials, and examination content. It also encompasses all policies concerning exam administration, security, and integrity.

MBLEx PREP



100 multiple-choice questions that cover each content area

MBLEx PREP MATERIALS

The Federation is committed to empowering MBLEx candidates in their exam preparation by offering a comprehensive array of FSMTB-authored study tools available in both English and Spanish. The Federation strives to provide resources that enable aspiring massage and bodywork professionals to approach the MBLEx confidently.

THE MBLEx CHECK™ ONLINE READINESS ASSESSMENT

The MBLEx Check Online Readiness Assessment is the FSMTB-authorized practice test designed to simulate the actual MBLEx experience. This comprehensive online examination presents 100 multiple-choice questions that cover each content area.

THE OFFICIAL MBLEx STUDY GUIDE

The Official MBLEx Study Guide and e-Study Guide include a comprehensive breakdown of the examination's core content areas and invaluable tips to encourage a successful and enriching examination experience. Notably, these guides offer a 100-question practice examination and include sample exam items, further enhancing the learning experience.



REACH



94% of users who took a REACH course were happy with the course content

89% would recommend REACH courses to other users



REACH™

REGULATORY EDUCATION
AND COMPETENCE HUB

FSMTB offers online CE courses sponsored by state boards through the Regulatory Education and Competence Hub (REACH) at reach4ce.org. Course completion information is recorded in the Massage Therapy Licensing Database (MTLD) for participating state boards to access.

CE REGISTRY

CE Registry is a registry of educators, providing massage and bodywork therapy continuing education, who meet and adhere to the national CE standards developed by the FSMTB regulatory community. The CE Registry accepts information from continuing education providers, including course completion information, and transfers that information into the national Massage Therapy Licensing Database (MTLD).

CE Registry includes a Course Search capability that allows potential CE consumers (LMTs) to search for courses that meet their needs.

CE Registry is a solution that meets the needs of the regulatory community by:

1. *Verifying primary source documentation of completed CE in MTL*
2. *Supporting the authority of state regulatory boards to accept CE for license renewal*
3. *Reducing the instances of CE fraud among licensees*
4. *Protecting the licensees from predatory practices by CE providers*
5. *Identifying and exposing providers who are not compliant with the standards established by the FSMTB membership*



CE Registry™

CONTINUING EDUCATION REGISTRY

States that accept CE registry courses

Alabama	Nevada
Alaska	New Hampshire
Arkansas	New Jersey
Connecticut	New Mexico
Delaware	North Carolina
District of Columbia	North Dakota
Georgia	Oklahoma
Idaho	Oregon
Indiana	Rhode Island
Iowa	South Carolina
Kentucky	South Dakota
Maryland	Tennessee
Michigan	Virginia
Missouri	Washington
Mississippi	West Virginia
Montana	Wisconsin
Nebraska	

CE Registry



728 courses registered

94% positive course feedback

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

This year the Government Relations team's primary focus was on providing support and education to members and legislators on the recommended minimum education hours requirements and the Interstate Massage Compact (IMpact). We also tracked a number of anti-human trafficking bills and bills updating the massage therapy practice act including areas on scope of practice, moral turpitude, and criminal background checks.

SERVICE



This year FSMTB provided written and oral testimony to

22 member jurisdictions and attended over **125 board and committee meetings**

FSMTB presented to a number of boards this year on topics such as the Massage Therapy Licensing Database, the Interstate Massage Compact, the benefits of FSMTB membership, and the crossover between human trafficking and massage therapy.

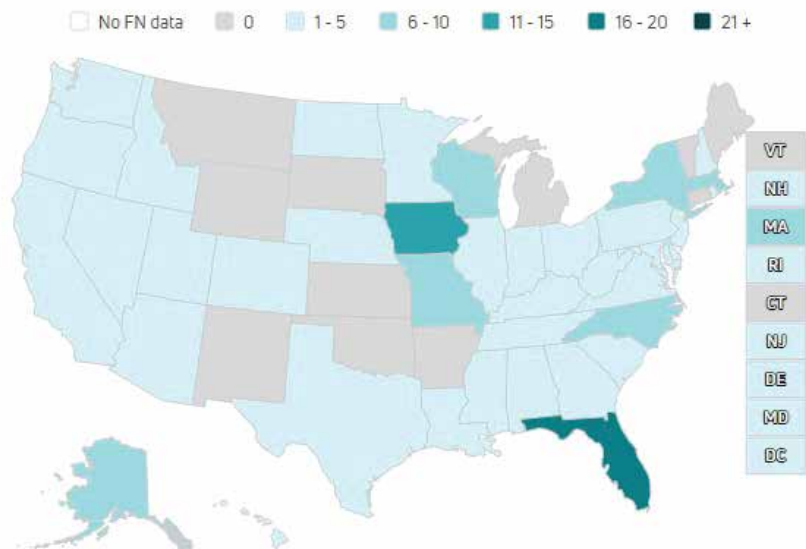
BILLS



A total of **153** bills were tracked, **29** of which were enacted

POLICY TRACKING

The most common type of legislation tracked related to the Interstate Massage Compact, massage boards, human trafficking, establishment regulation, license application and discipline, and scope of practice related to reflexology.



Impact

Interstate Massage Compact

It was a busy year for the Interstate Massage Compact. We attended several professional conferences, held informational webinars, and attended board meetings to bring awareness and build legislative and industry support.

The Interstate Massage Compact is proud to have broad support across the profession and is looking forward to a busy 2025 legislative session and standing up the compact soon!

For more information on the Interstate Massage Compact, visit massagecompact.org.

Impact



Ohio became the **SECOND** state to adopt Impact

MESSAGE THERAPY LICENSING DATABASE MTL D

The Massage Therapy Licensing Database is a vital component of the FSMTB's mission to simplify and standardize the licensure process and a key component of the Impact. A state's participation in MTL D makes the task of validating application information more efficient. State board/agency administrative staff can search MTL D to quickly find therapist information anywhere in the United States using simple search methods. This eliminates the need to search multiple websites for current license status of applicants, saves time, and is a practical solution to ensure accurate vetting of licensure applicants.



LICENSING EXAM
AND APPLICATION
DETAILS



STATE
LICENSURE
INFORMATION



CONTINUING
EDUCATION
COURSEWORK



COMPLETE
THERAPIST
PROFILE

MBE Summit



27 attendees representing
22 member jurisdictions

MASSAGE BOARD EXECUTIVE SUMMIT

The 2024 Massage Board Executive Summit was held in Savannah, Georgia, on April 4-5. This year, we invited massage board attorneys to attend along with their board's executive director.

Guest speakers included Dr. W. Keith Campbell, a psychology professor from the University of Georgia, who discussed generational differences and evolving cultural and societal trends resulting from changing demographics and their impact on educational expectations, standards, and uniformity. A Special Agent from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services-Office of Inspector General, shared his experience with Operation Nightingale, the nursing diploma scam that has affected over 7,000 nurses who used fraudulent education credentials to obtain a nursing license. Samantha Nance, Esq., from Embry Merritt Womack Nance, PLLC, also spoke regarding the Interstate Massage Compact, dispelling myths and misinformation and answering questions from attendees.

Attendees also had many opportunities to network and learn from each other.

VIRTUAL MEMBERSHIP EVENTS

Virtual Membership Events support the mission of the FSMTB by facilitating communication among member boards and providing education and guidance on topics related to massage therapy regulation. Topics addressed in 2024 included the Interstate Massage Compact, the Entry Level Analysis Project, State of Massage Education, Regulatory Trends and Continuing Competence. These events present an opportunity for members to discuss issues across jurisdictions and learn from one another.

ANNUAL MEETING

The 2023 FSMTB Annual Meeting was held in San Diego, California, on September 29-30, 2023. In attendance were 41 of our 45 Member Boards and 64 other guests including FSMTB members, association representatives, and speakers.

The Annual Meeting of the Delegate Assembly is the business meeting of the FSMTB and provides educational sessions and networking with your massage regulatory colleagues. It is one opportunity to engage in the governance of your organization by participating in elections to the FSMTB Board of Directors and Nominating Committee and setting policy priorities and direction through debate and voting on resolutions and bylaw amendments.

Guest speakers included The Network's Chief Strategy Officer who shared the history, dynamics, and data behind the current illicit industry, as well as how we can improve our collective response to protect the public. We were also joined Senior Director, Law Enforcement Training Education & Consulting and Attorney at Eckberg Lammers, Imran Ali, and Training and Education Coordinator/Investigation Specialist at Eckberg Lammers, Aimee Schroeder, who discussed efforts to tackle the illicit massage industry and the way many illicit businesses operate and thrive.

Attendees had many opportunities to connect with each other, share experiences, and learn about FSMTB.

ANNUAL MEETING



41 of 45 Member Boards
64 guests

To Our VOLUNTEERS...

Please know that your efforts do not go unnoticed or underappreciated.

You are an essential part of the FSMTB, and we are grateful to have you on our team. Thank you for your dedication, your kindness, and your unwavering support.

Contributions



3,780 volunteer hours
contributed to FSMTB

\$126,600 of volunteer
time donated

Thank you!

PEOPLE

EDUCATION TASK FORCE

Shari Aldrich, WA
Lurana Bain, IL
Ed Bolden-Greer, TN
Winona Bontrager, PA
Katherine Brady, TX
Kristin Coverly, CO
Kirby Ellis, AR
Eric Hart, MT
Randall Nikola, UT
Lanez Perry-Boone, PA
Susan Salvo, LA

EXAMINATION DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (EDC)

Karen Armstrong, MI
Su Bibik, MI
Ed Bolden-Greer, TN
Jeryd Bolden-Greer, TN
Katherine Brady, TX
Vickie Branch, NH
Laurie Craig, GA
Nicole Davis, NJ
Chimere Figaire-Correa, WA
Sandy Fritz, MI
Rosendo Galvez, IL
Janet Kelly, AR
Bethany Lowrie, PA
Ceena Lund, KS
Debbie Martinez, TX
Wendy McGinley, ND
Susan Proffitt, MI
Dr. Tim Reischman, NC
Charlene Russell, MS
Susan Salvo, LA
Elan Schacter, NC
Cherie Sohnen-Moe, AZ
Tracy Sullivan, CT
Charles Watson, KY
Roberta Wolff, TX

ESTABLISHMENT TASK FORCE

Sandy Anderson, NV
Karen Armstrong, MI
Ed Bolden-Greer, TN
Mike James, AL
Rick McElroy, CA
Adrienne Price, GA
Charlene Russell, MS
Jeff Van Laanen, OR

POLICY COMMITTEE

Paul Andrews, MA
Chimere Figaire-Correa, WA
Elizabeth Kirk, NC
Linda Lyter, WV
Kay Warren, NC

LICENSE RENEWAL COMMITTEE (LRC)

Ed Bolden-Greer, TN
Elizabeth Kirk, NC
Jan Shaw, SC
Bianca Smith, NV

EXAMINATION POLICY

Chimere Figaire-Correa, WA
Linda Lyter, WV
Kay Warren, NC
Caroline Guerin, TX

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

David Cox, MD
Charlene Russell, MS
Sharon Oliver, MD
Jan Shaw, SC

VIRTUAL MEMBER EVENTS PRESENTERS

Samantha Nance, *EMWN Law, Compact Drafting Attorney*
Dale Atkinson, *Esq., The Atkinson Firm and FSMTB General Counsel*

ANNUAL MEETING PRESENTERS

Chris Muller-Tabanera, *Chief Strategy Officer, The Network*
Imran Ali, *Senior Director, Law Enforcement Training Education & Consulting and Attorney - Eckberg Lammers*
Aimee Schroeder, *Training and Education Coordinator / Investigation Specialist, Eckberg Lammers*
Bryan Freiss, *Director of Information Security and Security Services, Pearson VUE*
Eric D'Astolfo, *Vice President of Business, Pearson VUE*
Jim Isajewicz, *Analyst Manager Thomson Reuters Special Services, LLC*
Niki Munk, *PhD, LMT, researcher*
Mica Rosenow, *LMT, researcher*
Dale Atkinson, *Esq., The Atkinson Firm, FSMTB General Counsel*

MESSAGE BOARD EXECUTIVE SUMMIT PRESENTERS

Samantha Nance, *Esq., Embry Merritt Womack Nance, PLLC*
Prof. W. Keith Campbell, *University of Georgia*
Eddie Calienes, *Special Agent, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Inspector General (HHS-OIG)*
Christine Bomber, *Compliance Professional in Postsecondary Education*

CONTINUING EDUCATION REGISTRY REVIEW PANEL (RRP)

Robin Alexander, IN
Khadijah Athanase, LA
Katherine Brady, TX
Pattie Campbell, VA
Barbara Castaldi, GA
Kalu Chan, PA
Melissa Clark, OH
Laura Clayton, NC
Nicole Davis, NJ
Elisabeth Drake, CA
Janet Kelly, AR
Ceena Lund, KS
Grace McCall, MD
Dr. Tim Reischman, NC
Charlene Russell, MS
Becky SanGregorio, NV
Elan Schacter, NC
Jan Shaw, SC
Bianca Smith, NV
Tracy Sullivan, CT
Tera Tonkins, IN
Richard Ventura, MO
Reina Vera, VA
Roberta Wolff, TX

FINANCE

Elizabeth Kirk, NC
Linda Lyter, WV

EXAMINATION ELIGIBILITY REVIEW PANEL (ERP)

Ed Bolden-Greer, TN
Linda Lyter, WV
Sharon Oliver, MD
Charlene Russell, MS
Tera Tonkins, IN

CONTENT DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY PANEL (CDAP)

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Katherine Brady, TX
Pattie Campbell, VA
Barbara Castaldi, GA
Kalu Chan, PA
Melissa Clark, OH
Laura Clayton, NC
Nicole Davis, NJ
Elisabeth Drake, CA
Chimere Figaire-Correa, WA
Rosendo Galvez, IL
Jimmy Gialelis, AZ
Janet Kelly, AR
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Becky SanGregorio, NV
Judy Olivia Santana, TX
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