

University of Vermont
HEALTH NETWORK

Central Vermont Medical Center

January 15, 2017

Rep. Maida Townsend
The House Committee On Government Relations
115 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05633

Dear Rep Townsend,

I have been a practicing Occupational Medicine at Central Vermont Medical Center for three and half years and in Vermont for 11 years. During that time, I regularly make referrals to other health care providers to help my patients recover from various work place injuries. Massage Therapists offer a safe and effective treatment that I frequently utilize for my patients. Not only does massage therapy offer an alternative to the risks of opioids and other types of pain medication, it also offers relief from pain, the stress of living without a job and faster recovery from surgeries.

Throughout this state there are numerous well trained massage therapists that understand the importance of clinical skills, continued education, and professional ethics. These therapists help keep the cost of health care down as well as provide safe ways to recover quickly.

A challenge I have is in determining which massage therapist I can safely refer my patients to and unfortunately, Vermont does not require state licensure to practice massage therapy to help me distinguish. While I try to refer my patients to massage therapists who are appropriately trained, I am not sure because there is no state licensing system that establishes the bar. My patients, as well as the public, deserve to know that the massage therapist treating them has been credentialed just like their physician, nurse, and physical therapist.

State licensure would increase the effectiveness of the profession as well as help protect the public while setting a minimum standard to practice massage therapy. This would safely increase public access to a type of healthcare that is standard in many other states across the country as well as in hospitals that are adopting complimentary health care for their patients.

I support licensure of massage therapists in the state of Vermont. I believe it will ensure a basic level of competency in massage therapy, improve quality, and clarify who I should refer my patients to.

Regards,



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OCCUPATIONAL MEDICINE

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