

My husband Chris Adams and I are small business owners who have provided professional bodywork to Vermonters since 1997. We strongly oppose yet another attempt by AMTA, a single massage organization among others, to force its licensing scheme into Vermont.

We urge the legislature and the Vermont Office of Professional Regulation to:

- Preserve the registry of massage, bodywork, and touch therapy practitioners.
- Regulate those massage business sites that hire employees and independent contractors, and specifically exclude from regulation owner-operated practices, protecting Vermont's co-owned-and-operated businesses and mom-and-pop shops like ours.

H.623 has not achieved and will never achieve what AMTA claims it will. As Vermont Office of Professional Regulation attorney Emily Tredeau emailed me, on February 5, 2026:

It is within the power of the legislature to enact massage licensure. OPR has repeatedly recommended against doing so.

[2024 report](#)

[2021 report addendum to 2016 report](#)

[2016 report](#)

[2010 report](#)

Its lack of efficacy is well demonstrated in data from the >80% of U.S. states, starting with Ohio in 1912, that regulate massage therapists through licensing schemes. Instead, H.623 would limit caring Vermonters' pathways to work and reduce the availability and diversity of the caring touch providers Vermonters depend on.

H.625 is foundationally problematic: AMTA's clash with the Federation of Massage Therapy Boards resulted in competing versions of the Interstate Massage Compact. Now it's very possible for different states to adopt different versions of the compact, with some states favoring AMTA over a broader coalition of bodywork professionals and the many clients they serve. We urge you not to allow this to happen in Vermont. (Per Associated Bodywork & Massage Professionals [ABMP], the professional organization Chris and I belong to: <https://www.abmp.com/updates/government-relations-legislative-updates/where-interstate-massage-compact-stands-and-what-happens-next>.)

AMTA-style licensing is widespread not because it works, but because AMTA is the 800-pound gorilla of massage organizations. Its outsize, well-funded voice silences others, including AMTA members who oppose mandatory licensing. This regulation would create barriers to practice for Vermonters, forcing practitioners to jump through useless hoops like specific but often irrelevant types of testing, training, and CEUs—all of which are unsupported by any data showing that they protect or benefit the public or the profession. They do, however, generate revenues for AMTA.

If licensing did what AMTA claimed, we would support it. Instead, with references below from Vermont OPR's 2021 "Addendum to the 2015-2016 Preliminary Sunrise Assessment on Massage Therapy: The Impact on Sexual Misconduct and Human

Trafficking of Professional Regulation of Massage Therapy.” (Full report: https://outside.vermont.gov/dept/sos/office_professional_regulation/regulatory/legislative_reports/massage_therapy_addendum_2021.pdf):

In its recent [member call to action](#), AMTA claims that:

- Over the past several years, Vermont law enforcement, prosecutors and OPR, have investigated and prosecuted numerous types of serious criminal cases involving massage therapists and establishments that emphasize the need for the highest level of public protection that OPR can provide – licensure.

Reality: Preserving Vermont’s registry of touch therapists provides this in ways that would not improve with AMTA-style licensure. “OPR believes, as detailed above, that registration is the most effective way of protecting the public (e.g., by notifying the public about offending massage therapists) without imposing unnecessary burdens on individuals seeking to provide massage therapy.”

AMTA claims that:

- Establishing licensure for both individual practitioners and establishments would prevent unlawful and illicit conduct by individual practitioners and establishments, while offering important health safeguards for Vermont consumers.
- Licensure ensures that consumers can confidently receive massage therapy from qualified professionals who meet established standards of education, training, and competency.

Reality: From the OPR report: “In 2010 and 2016, OPR reviewed regulation of the massage therapy profession using the Chapter 57 criteria, and, in both instances, found that regulation was not required to protect the public.”

After rigorous research, **Vermont OPR concluded:**

Because we are unable to identify any relationship between the regulation of legitimate massage therapy services and the effective deterrence or detection of human trafficking—which can occur in countless other contexts—we cannot conclude that clear and identifiable harm accrues to trafficking victims as a result of non-regulation of massage therapy. To the extent regulation may protect the public, its protective effects radiate to clients not providers of professional services. For these reasons, OPR does not recommend regulation of massage therapy as a means of addressing human trafficking.—Addendum to the 2015-2016 Preliminary Sunrise Assessment on Massage Therapy: The Impact on Sexual Misconduct and Human Trafficking of Professional Regulation of Massage Therapy

The full report:

https://outside.vermont.gov/dept/sos/office_professional_regulation/regulatory/legislative_reports/massage_therapy_addendum_2021.pdf

Why does AMTA keep pushing mandatory massage licensure in Vermont? H.623 creates a substantial windfall and ongoing revenues for the American Massage Therapy Association. For decades, AMTA staff and its paid lobbyists have mobilized Vermont members to push this licensing. AMTA’s membership dues include practitioner liability insurance and professional tools, all of which can be acquired (often more affordably)

elsewhere. AMTA heavily advertises its own courses and conferences that Vermont practitioners would need to comply with the law.

I belonged to AMTA for years before concluding that I could not fund or be represented by an organization that promotes costly, exclusionary myths. Chris and I belong to Associated Bodywork & Massage Professionals (<https://www.abmp.com/>). Bodyworkers seeking liability insurance can choose from multiple reputable organizations that insure touch practitioners, yoga teachers, movement therapists, and more.

Of course, I support any practitioner who wants to join AMTA. Many offer stellar professionalism and hands-on skills, grounded in hundreds of hours of training and years of experience, that help so many Vermonters. Those who want a more professional imprimatur than a registry should be able to obtain it—voluntarily, without burdening those who do not.

Sincerely,
Sheryl

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