



Associated Bodywork & Massage Professionals

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VIA email
February 26, 2013

Dear Representative Ray,

Associated Bodywork & Massage Professionals (ABMP) is a national professional association for massage therapists that provides professional liability insurance, business resources and publications, and legislative and regulatory advocacy on behalf of our members. ABMP's membership totals more than 82,000 nationwide, including 475 members in Utah.

ABMP is opposed to imposing mandatory continuing education (CE) requirements on licensees simply for the sake of requiring it. Utah has regulated the practice of massage therapy since 1981, we are not aware of what has changed so drastically to now mandate, not only CE in general, but so many hours. In reviewing the Board of Massage Therapy meeting minutes, I did not see examples of excessive disciplinary actions to warrant the state mandating twenty-four hours of CE.

ABMP values CE just as other do, however, we feel there should be a reason behind a policy. Massage therapy is regulated and there is clear disciplinary action data that can be used to make the case for (or against) imposing CE requirements, and how many hours should, or should not be required. The vast majority of CE offered in the massage therapy profession relates to professional development (learning a new massage technique), very few courses relate to public safety, such as contraindications for massage.

Other considerations should be made as well. According to our membership surveys, 63% of our members work part-time in the profession and rely on income from another occupation as well. They average \$24,000 in massage income per year. Seventy percent of our members are self-employed independent practitioners. The other national massage therapy association's data indicates a similar demographic. Twenty-four hours of CE can be expensive; practitioners could expect to pay (at minimum) \$18 per credit hour if taken in the city in which they live. It is obviously much more expensive if you have to travel to another part of the state, or out of state. If you live in a rural area, it can be a real challenge.

The purpose of regulating a profession is to ensure public safety. I think the entire profession is in favor of practitioners pursuing professional development, however, we do differ in that ABMP hesitates to encourage states to mandate such development. We believe disciplinary actions and data should drive the policy choice. On the surface, it does not seem that massage therapists are endangering the public to the extent that 24 hours of CE should be mandated of everyone.

Please re-evaluate the need to impose mandated CE on massage therapists, or perhaps significantly decrease the amount of hours required. Thank you for your consideration of ABMP's views. If you have any questions, or want to discuss our views, please contact me at 800-458-2267 extension 645, or jean@abmp.com.

Sincerely,

Jean Robinson
Government Relations Director