

RMTAO

2024 ANNUAL REPORT



Registered Massage Therapists'
Association of Ontario



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Association of Ontario



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Message From The Board Chair



Alex Kidd,
MRSc, BKin(Hon), RMT
Board Chair

It is a continued honour to serve as Chair of the RMTAO Board, with an opportunity to contribute to our profession alongside the extraordinary individuals that make up our Association. We are fortunate to have many dedicated colleagues who contribute in various ways—whether through our Community-Based Network program, Massage Therapy Today articles,

Queen's Park Day, HST Exemption campaigns, or other important initiatives that drive our profession forward. We are a collective of passionate individuals, and on behalf of the entire Board, I want to extend a heartfelt thank you to everyone who contributes to advancing our profession.

While mentioning our volunteers, I would be remiss if I failed to acknowledge the rest of the Board of Directors. I have had the privilege of working with an outstanding group of Directors, whose efforts have made 2024 an exceptionally productive year. Working with such a talented group has only deepened my commitment and passion for this field.

This year marks the end of the term for three valued board members: Deborah Coburn, Dylan Crake, and Erin Pierson. I look forward to celebrating their contributions at the Annual General Meeting. Deborah Coburn served as Vice Chair this past year and has been an integral part of our Audit and Finance Committee throughout her term. Dylan Crake has dedicated the last year and a half as our Board Secretary while also leading both the Membership and Elections Committee and the Board Development Committee. Finally,

Erin Pierson has chaired the Performance Review Committee and the Strategic Discussions Committee during her tenure. The contributions of these three individuals have been invaluable at the Board table, and they will be missed. However, I am confident that each will continue to be a valuable member of our association and profession. In March, the Board of Directors, alongside our Operations team, completed a thorough review process, resulting in our Strategic Plan for 2024-2027. This plan focuses on four priorities:

- 1 Programs and Services
- 2 Governance Framework
- 3 Management and Administration
- 4 Business Planning and Resources

We believe these priorities will serve as a solid foundation for guiding the future of our members and our profession. This process provided clear direction to the Executive Director and his team, allowing them to create a forward-looking Operational Plan that aligns with our long-term vision.

In addition, the Board also began reviewing our current position statements to ensure we remain aligned with the latest developments impacting our profession. We continue to conduct quarterly reviews of our policies and procedures to ensure effective oversight and the long-term sustainability of both the Board and the Association.

A particularly exciting update this year is the inclusion of our awards ceremony at the Annual General Meeting. While this is not a novel approach, the Board agreed that hosting the ceremony at the Annual General Meeting will allow more members to celebrate the achievements of outstanding individuals in our profession.

The RMTAO returned to Queen's Park on February 21st, hosting a successful event to share the

value of massage therapy with our provincial representatives. I extend my gratitude to all who volunteered their time to make the day a success. Feedback from participants highlighted a positive experience for all those involved.

This year also marked the successful completion of our Primary Care Pilot Project in partnership with CommunitiCare Health (formerly West Toronto Community Health Services), which has provided valuable insights into the accessibility of massage therapy and offers a framework for future integration into primary care settings. Additionally, the Pilot Project resulted in four videos that highlight the impact of massage therapy. This initiative also contributed to funding from Team Primary Care to create a website aimed at educating other health care providers on massage therapy's role in interdisciplinary care.

As Board Chair, I had the privilege of representing the RMTAO at the national level, alongside our Executive Director, through our continued work with the Canadian Massage Therapy Association (CMTA). The organization is evolving and finding new ways to support our profession nationwide. I am optimistic about the CMTA's path forward, particularly as we work toward national regulation. I was also honoured to attend the first national education conference, *Coming Together: Moving the Profession Forward*, hosted by the Registered Massage Therapists Association of British Columbia in Vancouver. Featuring several speakers from Ontario, the conference addressed critical topics such as national regulation, educational standards, research competencies, and evidence-informed care.

The RMTAO remains dedicated to achieving HST/GST exemption for all RMTs in Canada. The inclusion of massage therapy in Bill C-323 was largely thanks to our collaborative efforts with the CMTA. This issue, which

affects provinces differently, underscores the importance of supporting one another across jurisdictions to tackle national challenges.

Throughout the year, I have maintained ongoing dialogue with the Registrar of the College of Massage Therapists of Ontario, Maureen Boon, together with the RMTAO Executive Director, to ensure open communication between the regulator and massage therapists. The relationship between the RMTAO and CMTO remains crucial, as both organizations play key roles in shaping our profession.

It has been a privilege to serve as Chair of the Board this year, and I look forward to the opportunity to continue this work in the coming year, should I be given the chance to further contribute to the important efforts of our association.



Message From The Executive Director



Michael Feraday, MBA
Executive Director
and CEO

Advocacy is an investment in the future of the massage therapy profession, and ultimately, an investment in the future success of every individual RMT. As the Executive Director and CEO of the RMTAO, I advocate for a variety of different issues, but they all come back to increased recognition for the outstanding contributions that RMTs can make to health care. With a greater understanding of the

benefits of massage therapy, more awareness of the role of RMTs as regulated health professionals, and easier access to massage therapy by the people who can benefit from it, RMTs will have more opportunities to have a more successful practice.

Many of our advocacy initiatives this year have been laying the groundwork for easier access to massage therapy, which is an important element of the continued success of the massage therapy profession. Many people are aware of some of the benefits massage therapy can have but aren't necessarily aware of all the ways massage therapy might help them, and don't necessarily have access to massage therapy when they need to. This is why we've been focusing our efforts on removing some of the barriers to accessing massage therapy care. Although there is still work to be done, I'm happy with the progress we've made this year.

Integrating massage therapy care into primary care teams will help people access massage therapy who may not have otherwise had access. Massage therapists working closely on those teams with other health professionals will ensure that patients get the highest possible quality of care, within their communities, often for complex conditions. This year we concluded our Pilot Project providing funding to integrate massage

therapy into the primary care team at West Toronto Community Health Services, now CommunitiCare Health. Patients are provided with a full range of community health care and support services to keep them healthy and living in the community and avoid unnecessary hospital use. Two RMTs were integrated into this already successful model over the course of just over a year and were able to make a significant positive impact on these patients' quality of life.

Patients provided positive feedback about their experience of massage therapy integrated into their primary care, especially when massage therapy would not have otherwise been accessible to them. This Pilot was designed to verify the health and cost benefits of integrating massage therapy into a primary care team. The hope is that with positive results, we will be able to help integrate massage therapy into further primary care teams in the future. The Pilot Project, which recently concluded, was evaluated using a Quadruple Aim lens. The response to these results was overwhelmingly positive, both among members and government officials, and is the first step at further integrating massage therapy into additional primary care teams.

For this, and other initiatives, we need to ensure we have strong relationships with members of the provincial government. This year, we held our first Queen's Park Day since 2018 to build upon those relationships, and to ensure Members of Provincial Parliament were aware of the value of integrating massage therapy into healthcare teams.

One of our main goals during Queen's Park Day was to increase support for a Private Member's Bill that was introduced to declare the third Wednesday of October each year as Massage Therapy Day. Massage Therapy Day is intended to increase awareness of massage therapy and increase recognition of massage therapy's

important contributions to improving individuals' well-being. We also shared information about our Pilot Project to increase support for massage therapy in primary care, and emphasized the importance of provincial support for the federal issue of HST exemption. Although HST is a federal issue, and we need to work closely with our peers at the Canadian Massage Therapist Association (CMTA) to make that happen, we've made a lot of important progress towards HST exemption this year.

The former Minister of Finance, Chrystia Freeland had acknowledged that massage therapy meets the criteria for HST exemption because we are regulated in five provinces and had acknowledged that she received the formal application for HST exemption from the CMTA. She also confirmed that the government is still considering this request. Although this is still under consideration, it's important it remains top of mind for the government.

We circulated a petition to show the high levels of support for HST exemption among RMTs across Canada, as well as support from members of the public. This petition was signed by over 18,000 people, many of whom were RMTs or massage therapy patients in Ontario who want to support easier access to massage therapy. The petition was tabled in the House of Commons, and we received official acknowledgement of the petition from the Ministry of Finance. To further increase awareness of this issue we launched a letter-writing campaign that involved RMTs across Ontario writing letters to Minister Freeland's office, expressing their support for HST exemption. We provided a template letter to make this as easy as possible, and nearly 400 members have filled out the letter. This adds to an earlier letter writing campaign where we encouraged members to write to their own MPs in support of HST exemption. We will also continue regularly following up with the Ministry of Finance until HST exemption is achieved.

Although these are some of our primary advocacy issues, and they generally impact the massage therapy profession as a whole, we also advocate for our members on an individual level. We have received over 2,500 both phone calls and emails over the past year from RMTs who need help with a variety of issues including individual advocacy issues. This includes concerns about the behavior of an insurance company, a conflict with an employer, or a legal or regulatory concern. We advocate for these RMTs individually, ensuring they can have a good resolution to their concern. We also meet regularly with the CMTO to provide feedback and request clarification about regulatory issues including new standards, frequently asked regulatory questions, and health history forms.

More members than ever are recognizing how important it is to be a member of the RMTAO, and as a result our member retention continues to improve and we continue to welcome new members to the association. Members are recognizing that the RMTAO is not only an investment in their future success as a health professional, but is an investment in the success of the massage therapy profession as a whole.

I would like to thank the Board of Directors, our volunteers and our partners who have continued to support the Association. I would also like to thank the RMTAO staff, who are the force working tirelessly behind the scenes to make sure we are able to accomplish all that we do.

As we enter 2025, and which also marks 5 years since I joined the RMTAO, I am proud of how far we've come. We've made amazing progress this year, and I look forward to seeing the massage therapy profession continue to evolve, just as the health care landscape continues to evolve. It is through the support and dedication of individual RMTs that the massage therapy profession will continue to be able to succeed. Together we will be able to ensure the recognition of the important role that massage therapy has to play in healthcare.

Board of Directors

Alex Kidd, BKin, RMT
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Ian Kamm, BSc, RMT
Director

Catherine Roe, RMT
Director

Deborah Coburn, BA, RMT
Vice Chair

Shannon Marshall, RMT
Director

Susan Shipton, MCISc, RMT, CDT
Director

Dylan Crake, BSc, MSc, RKin, RMT
Secretary

Erin Pierson, BHSc, RMT
Director

Vicente Zabala, RMT
Director

Staff

Michael Feraday, MBA
Executive Director and CEO

Laura Fixman, BAA (Hons)
Manager of Communications

Angela Paton
Member Services Manager

Jill Haig, BSc (Hons), CAE
Director of Operations

Hariti Malhotra, BA (Hons)
Education and Events Planner

Eman Abubakar, BA (Hons)
Administrative Coordinator

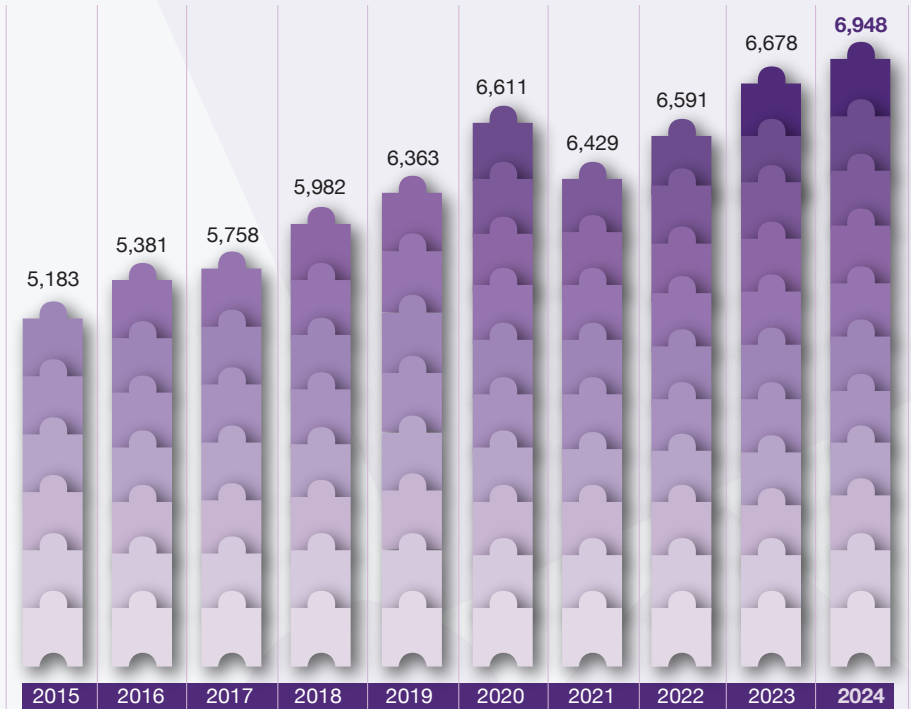
Registered Massage Therapists'
Association of Ontario



Membership Numbers

RMTAO membership continues to grow, as more and more people are recognizing the benefits of being part of their professional association. This includes an increased number of new members, both new grads and experienced RMTs joining the RMTAO for the first time. We also had higher member retention rates than in the past several years, which represents a success in our efforts to raise awareness about the benefits of membership. Students continue to join the RMTAO at high numbers, many of which become active members after they complete their entry to practice exams. Even outside of renewal we continue to attract steady numbers of new members, as more people become aware of what the RMTAO has to offer.

Yearly Activity for Active RMTAO Membership



Active: 6948	Associate: 65	Retired: 2	Life: 256	Student: 1,049
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Membership Programs

RMTAO members have access to a variety of programs as part of their membership including a free RMTFind listing, a subscription to our magazine *Massage Therapy Today*, discounted continuing education opportunities and access to various resources and discounted programs. Members can still choose to pay for the programs and services that work best for them with our flex membership model.

We would like to thank all of our program partners who work closely with us to continue to provide our members with discounted valuable benefits.



New Program – Intelligent Office

The RMTAO has partnered with Intelligent Office to offer our members discounted rates on room rentals. RMTAO members can use to offer massage treatment outside of a home or clinic setting. This is a great service for RMTs who have a home practice or a mobile practice.

Some other services offered by Intelligent Office include a premium mailing address, package pick-up and drop-off, discounted rates on meeting rooms and office space, and call answering and other administrative support.



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Member Survey Results



The RMTAO conducted a member survey in March 2024 to determine the views and interests of our members in different activities of the Association and determine areas of priority.

The survey was sent to all Active and Life members, and 719 members completed the survey. The average overall satisfaction rate with RMTAO membership is 78%, which is higher than the 2023 satisfaction rate of 77%. 97% stated they are at minimum satisfied with their RMTAO membership, up from 96% in 2023.

Survey respondents wanted to see more advocacy around MVA fees, barriers insurance companies place

on massage therapy care, and with CMTO changes. Respondents were also looking for increased advocacy updates, as well as programs and services that the RMTAO already offers. We have increased our advocacy updates in the areas highlighted over the past year, and regularly highlight our programs and resources to ensure that members are more aware.

Fee Survey Results

In February 2024, the RMTAO created a survey to determine the customary fees charged by RMTs across Ontario. We used this information to provide the average fees that RMTs charge in each district. RMTs are able to set their own fees, but the averages across Ontario can be one factor to consider when setting fees.



Other fee-related information provided by this survey includes how often RMTs raise their rates, whether RMTs offer discounts for specific circumstances, how RMTs handle cancelled or missed appointments, and the challenges RMTs face in making an adequate income.

The survey also provided other valuable information including but not limited to what types of practice environments RMTs are working in, and the treatment lengths they offer. There is data about what factors RMTs use to determine when to raise their rates, as well as RMT expenses, which can all be factors when making fee-related decisions.

The results were published in the RMTAO blog and used to inform the Average Massage Therapy Fees page on the RMTAO website.



Virtual Conference



The RMTAO hosted a virtual conference on June 1-2, 2024, that focused on all the knowledge and skills needed to achieve “Excellence in Practice”, the theme of the conference.

The conference included an inspiring keynote presentation by Dr. James Makokis and Anthony Johnson, an amazing Two-Spirit couple that was on the Amazing Race Canada. They spoke about ways we can increase accessibility and equity in healthcare, and the presentation was incredibly informative and well-received by the audience.



Many attendees were excited for the opportunity to choose from among our 12 breakout sessions spread over 2 days, which focused on location/condition specific pain, population specific pain, or business skills.



Many attendees praised the virtual format and commented on how beneficial it was to access quality continuing education from home. Many found access to recordings after the conference was completed to be very useful. We look forward to welcoming members to our next virtual Education Conference on April 6, 2025.

Webinars

The RMTAO offered a variety of webinars in 2024 that were very popular with members. Topics included scar treatment, massage therapy and cardiovascular conditions, assessment-based practice, employment law issues, massage therapy and anxiety, oncology massage, owning your boundaries and more.

We have received great feedback from our members that have attended the webinars, and some feedback on topics they’d like to see in 2025. While some topics would lend themselves well to in-person courses, most have found our webinars to be a great approach to continuing education due to the flexibility it provides with their schedules.



Webinars

28

Webinar participants

752*

*Up by 122 participants compared to 2023.

In-Person Courses

The RMTAO offered 6 in person courses throughout 2024. Topics included TMJ &TMD, Sacroiliac Joint Mobilizations, and Rib Mobilizations. The in-person courses take place across Ontario.

We will continue to investigate options for future in-person courses for the members that prefer to learn in-person and for topics that are better suited to be taught in an in-person setting.

Resources

The RMTAO continued to add to our Resource Library in 2024 based on areas members identified as preferences or priorities. The Resource Library is divided into a variety of helpful categories based on the topics, type, and category of resources.



We added two new helpful resources in 2024 that are outlined below.

CMTO Standard Spotlights



The RMTAO compiled a list of some of the common questions we get about the CMTO Standards of Practice, we created this resource so members can have a better understanding about how the Standards apply to their practices.

Fee-Related Business Practices Guideline

This resource was designed to help members make decisions surrounding fees. This includes information on receipts, gift certificates, compensation models and HST considerations, as well as factors to consider when setting fees.



Infographics

The RMTAO created more new infographics in 2024. These infographics provide an overview of diverse benefits of massage therapy and are a great resource members can use to promote their practice and the profession. These infographics, along with applicable references, are posted in the RMTAO Resource Library and shared on the RMTAO Facebook page.

In 2024 we added infographics focusing on massage therapy for improved sleep, the qualifications of an RMT, massage therapy for pregnancy and massage therapy for headaches and migraines.



Blog Posts

We continued to add blog posts throughout 2024 on a variety of topics. Many of these posts are meant to be easily sharable by our members on their social media channels to further spread the word to their audiences.

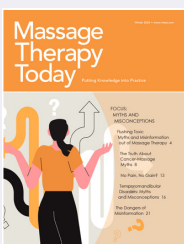
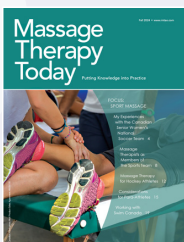
We created a series of 5 blog posts throughout 2024 highlighting RMTs who work in unique practice situations with a variety of other professionals, to give our members an idea of the opportunities available to them and the best ways to collaborate with other professionals in different scenarios. These profiles covered RMTs

working in primary care, with sports teams, in hospitals, with LGBTQ+ patients, and with patients who have had breast surgery.

Other blog posts included the benefits of massage therapy for office workers, an overview of insurer de-listings, and an overview of changes to registration regulation.

Massage Therapy Today

The RMTAO released four issues of *Massage Therapy Today* in 2024. The Winter, Spring and Fall issues were digital, and sent to all RMTAO members via email, as well as made available on the RMTAO website and promoted on social media. The Summer issue was printed and sent to all RMTs across Ontario, with content encouraging members to join the RMTAO. The themes of these issues were Myths and Misconceptions, Work-Related Pain, Professional Issues, and Sports Massage.



The Friday File

The Friday File | Issue 20 - Volume 41 | October 18, 2024

What's Happening at the RMTAO

Message Therapy Awareness Week Starts Sunday

Message Therapy Awareness Week starts this Sunday, October 20, and will run until Saturday, October 26.

This year, to mark the occasion, the RMTAO is focusing on the diverse benefits of massage therapy and highlighting different ways massage therapy can help relieve pain and improve function – from head to toe!

Follow the RMTAO on [Facebook](#), [X](#), and [Instagram](#) as we post patient stories throughout the week highlighting the diverse ways massage therapy has helped a variety of patients.

In addition, we have created several new sample social media posts focusing on different conditions and populations that can benefit from massage therapy treatment. This includes massage therapy for post-concussion headaches, shoulder pain, back pain, foot and ankle pain, and more!

You can [access our sample social media posts](#) to help spread the word next week during Message Therapy Awareness Week.

[Learn more about Message Therapy Awareness Week](#)

Views from our Departing Board Members

ADVERTISEMENTS

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Best sellers

Reserve your spot today!

The Friday File e-newsletter continues to be sent weekly to our members and partners with updates on Association activities, highlighting of practical resources and news that affects the massage therapy profession, and remains a trusted source of information for RMTAO members.

The regular advocacy updates from our Executive Director and CEO Michael Feraday ensure that members can keep up-to-date with the advocacy efforts of the Association. We also added a new monthly feature called "RMT to RMT Advice" where RMTs provide advice to their fellow RMTs.

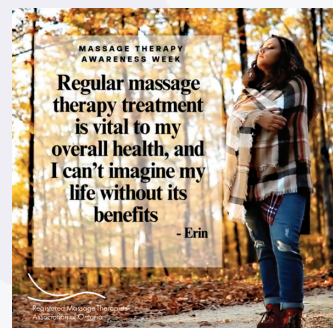
Massage Therapy Awareness Week

During Massage Therapy Awareness Week in 2024 we focused on the diverse benefits of massage therapy and highlighted different ways massage therapy can help relieve pain and improve function – from head to toe! We provided content and information to help our members promote these diverse benefits of massage therapy.

We did this by creating several new sample social media posts focusing on different conditions and populations that can benefit from massage therapy treatment. These included massage therapy for post-concussion headaches, shoulder pain, back pain, foot and ankle pain, and more.

We also posted several new patient stories throughout the week, each highlighting different ways massage therapy can have a positive impact on patients. These patients spoke about the positive changes they've seen after massage therapy treatments and the impact massage therapy has had on their quality of life. These stories are available on the RMTAO website, and were shared on the RMTAO social media channels throughout the week.

We would like to thank all of our members who shared this content with their networks throughout the week to help spread the word about the ways that massage therapy can benefit people from head to toe!



Social Media

The RMTAO maintains an active presence on Facebook, Instagram and X (formerly Twitter). We post a variety of content, with the most popular being image-based content focused on the benefits of massage therapy that our followers can share on their networks. We also use all of our social media channels to share news that impacts the Massage

Therapy profession and spotlight RMTAO events and initiatives.

Our overall social media reach and engagement continues to grow, and we continue to focus on posts to visually highlight the diverse benefits of massage therapy, which help drive that growth by being very easy and appealing to share.

Total Twitter/X Impressions	41,800
Total Twitter/X Followers	2,127
Total Facebook Page Reach.....	12,700
Total Facebook Likes	8,314
Total Instagram Reach.....	9,700
Total Instagram Followers.....	2,654
LinkedIn (New in November 2024)	NEW



Community-Based Networks



Community-Based Network (CBN) Coordinators volunteer their time to help create and nurture a robust community of local RMTs. The CBN groups allow RMTs and RMT students to connect with other RMTs in their area. The CBNs continued to meet in 2024

both virtually and in person, with 73 meetings throughout the year. There are currently 19 active CBNs across Ontario. We also launched a new virtual CBN specifically for early-career RMTs and massage therapy students.

Some of the meeting topics included bookkeeping, STRiVE review, sharing clinical experience, when to refer, and the benefits of self-care for practitioners.

We held our third CBN Guest Speaker evening on March 18th, 2024, with Emilie McKay. The topic of the meeting was 'Pricing in your market'. 36 members attended the meeting, with many expressing appreciation for the valuable information shared by Emilie and their overall enjoyment of the session.

Thank you to our volunteer CBN Coordinators for all of your hard work in creating safe spaces for your RMT community to come together and support each other!

School Ambassadors

School Ambassadors are RMTAO members who visit massage therapy schools, informing students about the RMTAO and encouraging them to register for complimentary student memberships.

In 2024 there were 22 visits to schools across Ontario from School Ambassadors, and 17 of the visits were in person.

Thank you to our School Ambassadors for helping to educate our students on the importance of the RMTAO and the benefits of membership!

Town Hall Meetings

For two weeks, at the beginning of May 2024, the RMTAO Executive Director Michael Feraday travelled across Ontario with CMTO Registrar Maureen Boon to host joint Town Hall events and connect with RMTs from across Ontario. Michael spoke about the RMTAO's latest advocacy initiatives and upcoming priorities, and Maureen provided CMTO updates. The CMTO and RMTAO hosted joint Town Hall meetings in St. Catharines, Guelph, Peterborough, Kingston, Ottawa, Thunder Bay, and Toronto. There were 300 RMTs that attended the Town Hall events across Ontario.



The Toronto Town Hall was recorded, and available to watch online on the CMTO's YouTube channel.

The Town Hall meetings had positive feedback from attendees, and even greater attendance than previous RMTAO Town Halls. The RMTAO and CMTO were able to work well together to answer questions and provide important information. Some topics covered included Community-Based Networks, the West Toronto Community Health Services pilot project, RMTs working with seniors, insurance company issues, scholarships and further education for RMTs, and the value and activities of Association groups like CORPHA, CMTA, WSIB Forum, Auto Coalition Forum and HST Exemption.

We look forward to working with the CMTO again to bring similar joint events across Ontario.

Recognition



Awards

Our annual awards presentation took place during the virtual conference in June 2024. Attendees heard from our Executive Director and our Board Chair about the many accomplishments of our award winners, as well as provided their congratulations as they watched acceptance videos from the awards winners themselves.

Congratulations to our Award Winners!



Dr. Erika Kuehnel
RMT of the Year in Remembrance of Ken Rezsnyak



Dani Faucher
Professional Service Award



Peter Becker
Educator of the Year



Morgan Richard
Research Award



RMT Master's Grant

In 2024, the RMTAO offered a grant of \$10,000 to a qualified RMTAO member who is a Master's Student, to help further their research. The goal of the grant is both to help advance knowledge through the



candidate's research, and support developing scholars in the field.

The winner of this grant was Rebecca Brenneman. She is a faculty member at Georgian College, and currently enrolled in a Master's of Education program with a concentration in Indigenous Education. Her research project and course work for this degree, which the RMTAO grant will help fund, will benefit the education of future RMTs.

We look forward to offering additional grants in the coming years to help RMTs and future RMTs further their education and contribute to the profession of massage therapy.

RMTAO Advocacy

The RMTAO undertakes a variety of advocacy initiatives with the provincial government, the insurance industry, the CMTO and other health professionals to ensure massage therapy is recognized and respected as an evidence-based health profession.

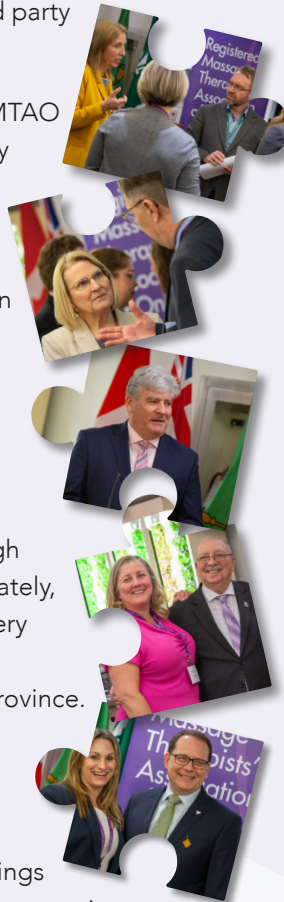
Queen's Park

The RMTAO held a Queen's Park Day on February 21, 2024. 28 volunteer RMTs participated in this day, meeting with a variety of MPPs throughout the day to deliver strong messages related to the need to include massage therapy in community health teams, HST exemption for RMTs, and the removal of the requirement for RMTs to get third party sign-off for an OCF-18.

Some individual meetings the RMTAO had throughout Queen's Park Day included meetings with key decision makers in the Ministry of Seniors and Accessibility and the Ministry of Health, Opposition Leaders, and other interested MPPs from across Canada.

We then witnessed MPP France Gélinas table the Bill "An Act to proclaim Massage Therapy Day." The Bill, which will now go through the legislative process, will, ultimately, make the third Wednesday of every October henceforth known as "Massage Therapy Day" in the province.

We also heard from Ontario Deputy Premier and Minister of Health Sylvia Jones who opened our evening reception with greetings from the government and highly supportive words for the profession's efforts to join provincial healthcare teams. The Minister was followed by



MPP France Gélinas, giving her party's support for the province's RMTs, and then Liberal John Fraser followed, framing his remarks with additional support.

Throughout the reception our RMT volunteers met with 23 MPPs and 18 Queen's Park staffers and supporters and shared similar messages. We regularly follow up with all MPPs met with about any items discussed.

Integration of RMTs in Primary Care

In 2023, the RMTAO entered an agreement to integrate two RMTs into the primary care team at West Toronto Community Health Services (WTCHS), now called CommuniCare Health. This pilot project was designed to evaluate the costs and benefits of integrating massage therapy into primary care teams, with the goal to further integrate massage therapy into the public primary care system in the future.

Patients at WTCHS who wouldn't otherwise have access to massage therapy care, and who experienced conditions that could benefit from massage therapy, were selected to participate in the pilot. The patients

participating were surveyed about their experiences with massage therapy, and a report of the results was released in August 2024.

The feedback and results from participating patients was outstanding and the pilot project was a success. The RMTAO will be working to continue to further integrate massage therapy into additional primary care settings.

Tax Exemption

- Created a petition that was signed by over 18,000 people, expressing support for HST exemption for RMTs. This petition received a response from the Federal Minister of Health Chrystia Freeland, confirming that massage therapy met the requirements for tax exemption and that the government had received and was considering the request.
- Massage therapy was included along with mental health services in Bill C-323 to request tax exemption for both professions. This is still being considered, but is a great way to keep our request for tax exemption front of mind for the government.
- Created a template letter to Minister of Finance Chrystia Freeland that RMTs could send expressing their support for tax exemption.
- Sent regular letters to Chrystia Freeland and other members of the Ministry of Finance, reiterating the importance of tax exemption for RMTs.

Other Advocacy Activities

Below is a list of the primary advocacy activities that the RMTAO has undertaken in 2024.

- Met with various Members of Provincial Parliament (MPPs), as well as key decision makers within the Ministry of Health to promote the benefits of massage therapy and promote the further inclusion of massage therapy in government funded health care initiatives.

- Made a presentation at the Team Primary Care Summit highlighting the results of our Pilot Project, and the benefits of massage therapy in primary care.
- Met with the Ministry of Long-Term Care to discuss how massage therapy can contribute to massage therapy care, and also contribute to seniors remaining independent for longer.
- Worked closely with other health professional associations to contact the Ministry of Finance to ensure increased compensation when working with people who had been injured in automobile accidents.
- Kept in contact with the Ministry of Finance regarding removing the requirement of having a third-party health professional sign off on an OCF-18 complete by an RMT.
- Engaged with other health professional associations in the Coalition of Ontario Regulated health Professional Associations, the WSIB Healthcare Forum and the Coalition of Health Professional Associations in Ontario's Automobile Insurance Sector on issues of mutual concern.
- Met regularly with the CMTO Registrar and Council President to discuss issues of mutual concern such as fee increases, changes to health history form recommendations, advertising standards, STRiVE, and concerns related to sexual abuse.
- Continued to help RMTs navigate being delisted from insurance companies, as well as helped gather a delisting hotline with numbers from various insurance companies RMTs can call in the event that they're delisted.
- Met with the City of Markham to request clarification and changes in language for their new initiative requiring additional licensing for businesses owned by RMTs and by certain other health care professionals.

CONTACT US

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