



PRESS RELEASE

Registered Massage Therapy

Feds fail on HST exemption for healthcare

April 16, 2024

For Immediate Release:

TORONTO: It is with deep disappointment that thousands of Registered Massage Therapists and millions of their patients across Canada greeted today's (April 16, 2024) Federal Budget that did not include provisions to exempt massage therapy from collecting and remitting HST.

Despite support from members of all the main political parties and direct appeals to the Minister of Finance herself, the budget did not address the issue, nor has the government offered indication on when the exemption will be put in place as it has for other registered health professions meeting established criteria.

Massage therapy is a regulated health profession in Ontario. Moreover, the profession is regulated in four additional provinces: British Columbia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador and Prince Edward Island. The Province of Saskatchewan has also enacted legislation to regulate the profession, which will be in force once a regulatory college is established and approved. As massage therapy is a regulated health profession in at least five provinces and our profession universally supports exemption, that means the criteria for removing HST has been met.

“After more than two years of requests and literally, hundreds of meetings, emails, letters, phone call and texts, the government has failed to meet its own legislated requirements and the mandate to keep healthcare costs affordable for Canadians,” says Executive Director and CEO of the Registered Massage Therapist Association of Ontario (RMTAO), Michael Feraday.

The RMTAO has received full support from Ontario's Minister of Health as well as members of the Official opposition both Federally and Provincially to move forward with HST exemption. The government acknowledges that, by both federal and provincial statutes, healthcare is mandated to equally provide Canadians with accessible and affordable healthcare, and, in doing so, where health professions are regulated in five or more provinces, those services are eligible to be exempt from HST/GST taxes.

In addition, Massage Therapists across Canada have sent letters to their respective MPs requesting the exemption and RMTAO has worked with federal offices and committees to put



forward committee motions that would compel the government to act. A petition circulated from December 11, 2023, to April 9, 2024 garnered 18,382 signatures from across Canada, in support of HST/GST exemption.

“While we are disappointed with the lack of action, RMTAO remains steadfast in our efforts to toward HST exemption. We are now reaching out to national and provincial media to bring attention to this important issue, and we will continue to press the government for an exemption to be included in the fall budget normally released in late October or early November. If need be, we will also make HST exemption an issue for the next federal election mandated on or before October 2026,” concludes Mr. Feraday.

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Background:

- **Massage therapy has been regulated in Ontario for over 100 years.** During the First World War Massage therapy treated thousands of Canadian soldiers returning injured from the battle front, and, recognizing the value of the practice, The Ontario Board of Regents first regulated massage in 1919.
- ***An Act to proclaim Massage Therapy Day was tabled in the Ontario legislature February 21, 2024.*** The landmark recognition by the province is expected to pave the way to an even greater role in Ontario’s healthcare system.
- **Today, massage therapy is performed by over 23,000 registered practitioners in Canada,** including 14,000 across Ontario whose training and skills are utilized by patients from every walk and stage of life.
- **Massage therapy plays an integral role in rehabilitation from injury or disease,** provides relief from the physical symptoms of depression, stress and anxiety, and relieves musculoskeletal pain and other ailments.
- **RMTs are among 26 health-care professions that are governed by the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991** that ensures the public have access to massage therapy services that meet or exceed required professional and ethical standards.

