

# Registered Massage Therapists' Association of British Columbia

SAFE, EFFECTIVE HEALTH CARE

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## Massage Therapy Regulated in PEI

3/1/2019

**March 1, 2019** – Massage Therapy has been included as a Regulated Health Profession under the Prince Edward Island Regulated Health Professions Act. This means that individuals practicing massage therapy in PEI will, as of March 1, 2019, be considered regulated health professionals. New applicants to the profession will need to apply with the new College of Massage Therapists of PEI which is currently being formed.

The RMTBC would like to congratulate the Prince Edward Island Massage Therapy Association (PEIMTA) for this accomplishment. This represents a significant step forward for the massage therapy profession both in PEI and across Canada.

The regulation of massage therapy in PEI has positive implications for massage therapists across Canada. Now that massage therapy will be regulated in five provinces – Ontario, British Columbia, Newfoundland, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island – an application for GST tax exemption status for the massage therapy profession can be made to the Federal Minister of Finance.

With this fifth province achieving regulated legislation for massage therapy, there will be a series of steps that must be taken immediately. The first step will be for the RMTBC, in partnership with the Canadian Massage Therapy Alliance (CMTA) to send a letter to the Federal Minister of Finance requesting tax exemption. The RMTBC is a member of the CMTA.

Once this letter is acknowledged, the Minister of Finance will require specific information such as the financial impact on the Federal Government. Evidence will also be required to demonstrate that the majority of RMTs in each regulated province are united behind this request. Once the Minister is satisfied with the information provided, the request would need to be formed into a bill or included in another bill such as the Federal Budget, to be heard in parliament and then passed into law.

As this is a Federal issue, most of the responsibility will be with the CMTA, with support from the regulated and unregulated provinces. Increasing the awareness of both the benefits of massage therapy and the burden that paying tax presents to patients; as well as, strengthened relationships with Members of Parliament, we will be able to confidently move towards tax exemption for the massage therapy profession.

Historically, this has been a process that has taken several years. For example, once a fifth province was regulated for Naturopathy, it took two years before they were granted a tax-exempt status. The act of tax exemption of a distinct group is an act of parliament. This requires that a legislated bill be formed and passed, or tax exemption needs to be included in the federal budget, as was the case for Naturopaths and Acupuncturists in 2014.

In concert with the CMTA and our other provincial partners, we will be launching a targeted, wide-reaching campaign to raise awareness and build support for tax exemption for massage therapists in Canada. The Registered Massage Therapy Association of Ontario (RMTAO) on behalf of CMTA members has secured the services of Hill & Knowlton Strategies. This consulting group were previously responsible for guiding the Naturopaths and Acupuncturists through the tax exemption process.

Again, obtaining tax exemption for massage therapy will require the support and cooperation of all massage therapists across Canada. We will be encouraging member's participation in advocacy initiatives. We look forward to working with our members, our partners in the CMTA and massage therapists across the country. We are confident that given this team approach, we will achieve the goal of tax exemption.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the RMTAO for permission to use portions of the above message. Further information will be provided over the coming months.