



# *The* RMTBC REVIEW

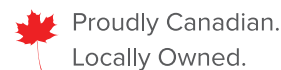
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The RMTBC Review is published twice a year for registered massage therapists (RMTs). It provides a voice for RMTs and acts as a source for the latest research. It is a vehicle for the general population to understand and respect the valuable work of RMTs. Funding is provided by the RMTBC and through advertising revenue.

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# DUTY OF RMTS TO COOPERATE WITH A CCHPBC INVESTIGATION



Madeline Green is an Associate and Sarah Jadis is an Articling Student at Whitelaw Twining Law Corporation in Vancouver.

*by Madeline Green with contributions by Sarah Jadis*

Registered massage therapists (RMTs) are members of a regulated profession and, as such, are duty-bound to comply with the requirements of their regulatory body, the College of Complementary Health Professionals of BC (CCHPBC), formerly the College of Massage Therapists of BC (CMTBC). One such requirement is set out in Section 19 of the Code of Ethics, which mandates RMTs’ cooperation with CCHPBC investigations. This requirement ensures that the CCHPBC can satisfy its statutory obligation to regulate the profession in the public interest.

### The Obligation to Respond and Cooperate

Section 19 of the Code of Ethics provides that RMTs must respond to any inquiries, requests and directions from the CCHPBC in a professional, responsible and timely manner. Failing to comply with these obligations can lead to severe consequences, as demonstrated by recent disciplinary decisions.

In one recent disciplinary decision, a former RMT received a citation for failing to attend an interview as required under the Bylaws on the basis that the RMT was ostensibly in the process of retaining legal counsel. The CMTBC argued that this conduct was not only serious enough to constitute a breach of the Bylaws, but it also warranted a finding of unprofessional conduct. The Discipline Committee panel agreed, stating that “...a registrant’s duty to cooperate with a CMTBC investigation is critical to the functioning of a self-regulating body.”

In another recent disciplinary decision, a former RMT failed to respond to 13 communications from the CMTBC regarding the expiration of her professional liability insurance. As a result, the Discipline Committee determined that her actions breached the Code of Ethics and constituted unprofessional conduct. The panel imposed disciplinary measures including suspension, reprimand, and financial penalties.

It is important to note that non-cooperation does not have to be as severe as described in the above decisions to warrant the imposition of disciplinary measures. In another recent disciplinary decision, a former RMT failed to respond to only two correspondences from the CCHPBC during the course of an investigation and still received a reprimand and a suspension of her registration.

### Why Cooperation is Essential

As emphasized in the disciplinary decisions above, a registrant’s duty to cooperate with a CCHPBC investigation, and to respond to inquiries, requests and directions from the CCHPBC in a professional, responsible and timely manner, is critical to the functioning of a self-regulating body. Failure of RMTs to promptly respond to the CCHPBC during the course of investigations impedes the CCHPBC’s statutory obligation to regulate the profession. Further, public confidence in the profession hinges on the assurance that RMTs will uphold ethical standards and engage with regulatory processes when required.

### Consequences of Failing to Cooperate

A failure to cooperate not only undermines the CCHPBC’s authority but can also result in significant professional and financial repercussions for the RMT involved. Section 39(2) of the Health Professions Act sets out a list of penalties that may be imposed in the event a citation is proven against an RMT, which could include a reprimand, a suspension, a fine, cancellation of registration or a combination of the above.

Ultimately, failing to cooperate with the CCHPBC during the course of an investigation is a serious regulatory breach and will be treated as such by the CCHPBC. RMTs must fully inform themselves of their obligations under the Code of Ethics and the Bylaws if they are subject to a CCHPBC investigation.

### Best Practices for RMTs During an Investigation

To avoid disciplinary action and maintain compliance with CCHPBC regulations, RMTs should adhere to the following best practices:

1. **Contact RMTBC** – If you have RMTBC’s Optional Malpractice Insurance immediately contact RMTBC Member Services who will then contact RMTBC’s insurer to secure appropriate legal representation.
2. **Respond Promptly** – Acknowledge and reply to all communications from the CCHPBC in a timely manner.
3. **Maintain Professionalism** – Interactions with CCHPBC representatives should be courteous, respectful, and professional at all times.
4. **Request Extensions When Necessary** – If additional time is needed to respond to inquiries, formally request an extension with valid reasons rather than ignoring communications.
5. **Seek Legal Counsel Proactively** – If legal guidance is needed, engage a lawyer as soon as possible instead of delaying the process.
6. **Keep Records** – Document all communications with the CCHPBC, including emails and phone calls, to ensure clarity and accountability.
7. **Comply with Requests for Information** – Provide any required documentation or information in full and within the given deadlines.

By adhering to these principles, RMTs can protect their professional standing and contribute to a transparent, accountable, and ethical regulatory system. Cooperation with CCHPBC investigations is not only a professional obligation but also a critical component of maintaining public trust in the massage therapy profession.







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"I love the work culture here. Suzie, the clinic owner, is very supportive, welcoming, and kind. This makes it a pleasure to come to work." - Kaziya Milay, RMT



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# AN INTERVIEW WITH ALEX KIDD



President of the Canadian Massage  
Therapist Association (CMTA)

**Please tell us about yourself, where do you live, where were you born, how did you get into the profession, your education, your hobbies and your passion.**

I was born, raised, and still live in Weston, Ontario, a neighbourhood in Toronto that has always been home. I completed my Bachelor of Kinesiology in 2009 at Brock University and, like many grads, found myself wondering what the next step should be. It was during a university fair that I struck up a conversation with some massage therapy program recruiters, and something just clicked. Six months later, I was sitting in my first class in the Humber College Massage Therapy Program.

Last year, I completed my Master’s degree in Rehabilitation Science from the University of British Columbia. I’ve been an educator in the field for over a decade, served as a Board member of the Registered Massage Therapists’ of Ontario (RMTAO) since 2020 and have served as Secretary, Vice Chair and now in my second year as Chair. I have been a surveyor for the Canadian Massage Therapy Council for Accreditation (CMTCA) since 2024. You could say massage therapy isn’t just my profession, it’s my passion.

Outside of work, I’m a sports fanatic, dog dad, and husband (saving the best for last, of course!).

**How long have you been president of the CMTA? Can you please tell us a bit about your background and what motivated you to become involved in an executive capacity?**

I’ve been serving as the President of the CMTA since January 2025. I’ve always been driven to get involved, largely thanks to mentors who showed me the value of asking questions and challenging the status quo. Stepping into an executive role felt like a natural progression; if we want to see meaningful change, we have to be willing to contribute and take responsibility. For me, it’s about learning, growing, and helping move the profession forward in a thoughtful and collaborative way.

**What are your aspirations for the CMTA and how it relates to the growth of the massage therapy profession?**

One of the CMTA’s key aspirations is to support the regulation of massage therapy in all provinces and territories across Canada. Achieving this goal requires coordinated efforts and alignment among several organizations and initiatives. This includes updating the current Inter-Jurisdictional Practice Competencies and Performance Indicators document in collaboration with FOMTRAC, supporting consistency with CMTCA accreditation standards, and ultimately working toward a future national entry-to-practice examination.

These efforts cannot occur in isolation. The CMTA has an important role to play as a facilitator, by bringing stakeholders together to support a unified professional framework that enhances public protection, practitioner mobility, and the credibility of massage therapy across the country.

Another important priority is securing GST/HST exemption. In many provinces, the tax increases the amount patients pay, which can limit public access to massage therapy services. It also highlights a clear distinction between massage therapists and other health care providers who are exempt. Addressing this issue would be a meaningful step toward greater recognition and accessibility of the profession.

**What are the achievements you are most proud of during your tenure and what goals/projects do you hope to see continue?**

This is a difficult question to answer, as I’ve only been actively involved with the CMTA Board for the past year. It wouldn’t feel right to take credit for the significant work that was accomplished before my time, and I remain inspired by the dedication and contributions of previous Board members.

That said, I’m proud to have contributed to the recent revision of the association’s bylaws. This process was a valuable learning experience for the entire Board and has helped lay a stronger foundation for the CMTA’s future. I believe it’s an important step toward building a more self-sustaining organization with clear policies and procedures to support future goals and initiatives.

Looking ahead, I hope to continue in this role and work with the Board to advance short-term priorities. Regardless of how long my tenure may be, my goal is to contribute to an association grounded in trust, transparency, and shared success.

**What are the biggest challenges facing the profession? What are the biggest challenges facing the CMTA and where do you see it going in the future?**

One of the biggest challenges facing the profession is navigating the diversity of clinical approaches among practitioners. While this reflects the adaptability of massage therapy, it can sometimes lead to divisions in how the profession sees itself. I believe there is room, and value, for a wide spectrum of practice within our profession, as long as we remain anchored in shared standards and mutual respect.

For the CMTA, the main challenge is balancing the needs of a very diverse community. We represent both regulated and unregulated provinces, large and small populations, provinces with multiple associations and those with a single representative body. We also serve both member associations and the broader professional community, including those who may not be directly affiliated. A key priority moving forward is to ensure representation from all provinces, particularly Alberta and Quebec, so the national voice truly reflects the full scope and diversity of the profession across Canada.

Despite this complexity, the diversity of voices is a strength. Looking ahead, I see the CMTA continuing to grow in its role as a unifying body; one that creates space for differing perspectives, and works collaboratively to address the shared challenges of our evolving profession.

# EVIDENCE FOR MASSAGE MECHANISMS

# TRAUMA-INFORMED PRACTICE

by Dr. Nikita Vizniak



## Evidence for Massage Mechanisms

### Massage Mechanism - How it might work?

- Contextual Factors** - Clinical outcomes are often linked to expectations of future wellness, patient mood, placebo effect and conditioning. 1, 20, 34
- Therapeutic Contact** - Touch mediates the release of a number of hormones that lower reactivity to stress and improve affect. 2, 17, 22, 29, 33, 39
- Pain modulation** - Somatosensory nerve input can alter neuroimmune processes correlated with lower pain perception. 1, 4, 24, 30, 31, 38
- Mechanical factors** - Physical pressure and motion reinforce neuromuscular pathways, mechanically lengthen tissues and cause fluid movement which may decrease intraneural edema and help clear noxious by-products of inflammation, promote satellite cell proliferation as well as ribosome and protein turn over. 3, 4, 18, 23, 27, 35, 37, 40, 42, 43

### Evidence Informed Practice Model



### Sleep Modification

- Cancer survivors - Samuel et al. SR
- Insomnia & life quality - Hachul et al.
- Insomnia - Ko et al.
- Heart Failure - Sable et al.
- Fibromyalgia - Castro-Sánchez et al.
- Surgical Populations - Boyd et al. SR
- Anxiety post surgery - Kukimoto et al. SR

### Pain Modulation

- Acute Pain - Chou et al. systematic review SR
- Chronic Pain - Skelly et al. SR
- OADJD - Ye et al. (SR)
- Systemic pain - Lewis et al. SR
- Oncology patients - Currin et al.
- Plantar fasciitis - Fraser et al. SR
- Shoulder ROM - Yeun. SR meta
- TMJ pain - Randhawa et al. SR
- Headaches - Cole et al.
- Carpal tunnel Syndrome - Huisstede et al. SR
- Low back pain - Qaseem et al. SR



### Therapeutic Contact

- Patient Experience - Bishop et al.
- Expectations - Ellingsen et al.
- Touch - Winstead-Fry et al. meta
- In Children - Ireland et al.
- Neonates - Alvarez et al. SR
- Blood pressure - Field T.
- Post stroke depression - Shen et al. SR meta



Trauma-informed massage therapy is a person-centered approach that acknowledges the impact of trauma and integrates this understanding into care. Trauma, caused by events like abuse, violence, or accidents, can manifest as chronic pain, muscle tension, or nervous system imbalances. This approach avoids assumptions, focusing instead on creating a safe, respectful environment where people feel empowered and in control.

### Principles of Trauma-Informed Practice

1. Safety
2. Trust & Transparency
3. Choice & Collaboration
4. Cultural & Historical Awareness
5. Empowerment

### Practical Applications in Massage Therapy

A trauma-informed massage therapist creates a holistic experience by integrating these principles into their practice. This may include:

Conducting detailed, client-led intakes to understand comfort levels and preferences.

- Using consistent, calming communication to reduce anxiety.
- Employing slow, gentle techniques like Swedish massage or myofascial release to avoid overstimulating the nervous system.
- Being attentive to trauma triggers, such as sudden movements, unfamiliar techniques, or areas of sensitivity.

Draping protocols, for instance, are critical. Proper draping ensures physical privacy, helping clients feel secure and respected. Therapists should never assume a client's comfort and must obtain informed consent, particularly for sensitive or emotionally charged areas like the abdomen or neck.

### Benefits of Trauma-Informed Practice

Adopting a trauma-informed approach fosters trust, safety, and collaboration, helping clients with trauma feel supported and relaxed. It can reduce tension, alleviate pain, and improve well-being. By emphasizing safety, respect, and empowerment, therapists create a nurturing environment that supports healing and models healthy boundaries.

### Safety

Establishing physical and emotional safety is foundational. A trauma-informed massage therapist ensures the treatment environment feels safe and predictable. This includes maintaining a professional demeanor, respecting boundaries, and fostering trust. The therapist can explain procedures, ask for consent before any hands-on treatment, and ensure the client has the option to stop or adjust treatment at any time.

### Trust & Transparency

Building trust requires open communication and transparency. Clients need to know what to expect during their sessions. Discussing the techniques, draping procedures, and goals of the session upfront allows clients to make informed choices. Transparency also includes clearly explaining any adjustments or responses during treatment.

### Choice & Collaboration

Trauma often involves a loss of control. Offering choices during a session helps clients reclaim agency over their bodies. For example, therapists can ask, "Would you prefer to start with your back or shoulders?" or "How does this pressure feel for you?" Collaboration ensures the client is an active participant in their care, reducing feelings of vulnerability.

### Cultural Historical Awareness

Trauma can be interwoven with cultural, societal, and historical factors. Recognizing diversity and maintaining a non-judgmental attitude ensures inclusivity. Therapists must also be aware of power dynamics and avoid practices that may unintentionally trigger individuals from marginalized backgrounds.

### Empowerment

Focuses on honoring the client's voice, strengths, and autonomy. A trauma-informed massage therapist reinforces that the client's feelings and feedback are valid. Techniques such as checking in regularly, adjusting pressure, or pausing the session when discomfort arises encourage clients to advocate for their needs.

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# AN INTERVIEW WITH JOHN BEASLEY



Director of Claims Programs and Strategy for ICBC

## A brief history and recap on how the relationship between ICBC and the RMTBC has evolved including Enhanced Care and how it has changed the manner in which ICBC deals with injured clients.

This relationship certainly started before I joined ICBC in 2021. Going back to 2018, leading up to the April 1, 2019 changes, ICBC initiated relationships with leads from the associations of the health care disciplines that ICBC customers attended most commonly for rehabilitation when injured in a crash; this included RMTBC. Collaboration with the RMTBC continued to increase over time. In 2019, ICBC established the first ever ICBC Health Care Practitioner Advisory Group.

The Health Care Practitioner Advisory Group continues to meet quarterly to provide strategic level feedback to ICBC to support ICBC’s Enhanced Care model. It is comprised of industry leaders who can provide long-range insights, industry-wide perspective and strategic recommendations that will help support the long-term success of the model with a specific focus on serious injuries.

ICBC also meets with RMTBC weekly to discuss any issues, develop training, receive feedback, share updates, etc. ICBC sponsors and attends RMTBC symposiums to provide information and meet members. Consultation with our health care partners is key to improving Enhanced Care for our mutual customers.

## What have been some of the highlights and benefits to both their clients and our members? What have been some of the challenges?

With a little recency bias, I feel the development of health care provider locator will be a significant benefit to massage therapists that are a part of our Recovery Network. Customers can now easily find a provider in their community who direct bills ICBC. We continue to work through opportunities as well. The RMTBC has been integral in helping determine ideal treatment durations that work for both the customer and therapist. We also continue to look at ways to improve access to massage for our customers across BC as there is difficulty in finding therapists throughout the province, especially in rural and remote areas.

## Given the complexity of moving to Enhanced

## Care and launching the Recovery Network, what mechanisms now exist to communicate with stakeholders?

We communicate with stakeholders through our newsletter, which uses the communications email address on their vendor account, plus vendors can sign up directly to receive the newsletter. We also share information with RMTBC (all the associations) to distribute to their members. And the ICBC Health Services Partners page on ICBC.com is constantly updated with any changes to policies or procedures, notifications of any outages and service interruption, how-to guides, examples and forms. We also know that sometimes, additional communication is necessary to address concerns directly from the RMTBC members through town halls and fireside chats.

## How did/does ICBC support practitioners through this transition to Enhanced Care and now the Recovery Network?

Business Partners page on ICBC.com will have the most up to date information, including any updates, how-to guides and examples. It also has the Frequently Asked Questions that has been developed to provide additional clarity to the Health Care Services Terms and Program Guide. RMTBC organized a webinar to further inform members on the Recovery Network, which is also available in the members area of the RMTBC website.

Finally, please don’t hesitate to raise concerns to your RMTBC liaison or contact ICBC directly if you have questions or concerns at [recoveryprograms@icbc.com](mailto:recoveryprograms@icbc.com)

## Looking to the future, do you anticipate many more changes in the relationship and what are your ultimate goals?

ICBC is constantly working to improve the experience for our customers and health care partners. The association has been integral in raising concerns and addressing issues in partnership and we look forward to continuing that relationship. Specifically, we’d love to see more RMTs in smaller communities, so all British Columbians have access. We’ll also be reaching out to RMT schools to meet new graduates and provide early understanding of the recovery journey for ICBC customers.

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