

The Massage Therapist for You

Academy of Clinical Massage ; National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork

Editor's Note: This article is written by the Academy of Clinical Massage and the National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage & Bodywork (NCBTMB).

Massage therapy is a great service to offer in your chiropractic clinic. However, finding a massage therapist who is knowledgeable about soft-tissue pain and injury treatment, and is also a good team player who understands how the health care system works, can be a serious challenge.

Other Key Challenges

- Training for massage therapists is highly variable. It is difficult to know what the therapist has learned and how that will translate into working in your practice.
- Working as part of the health care team is different than what many solo practitioners have been trained for.
- Entry-level training in massage school does not prepare massage therapists for working in a health care environment, so additional continuing education is essential.
- Up until this point, there hasn't been any standardized or recognized credential that can help identify a massage therapist who has an advanced level of training and is prepared to work in this environment.

The National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork (NCBTMB; www.ncbtmb.org) has recognized the need for advanced credentialing for many years. Serious efforts have previously been made to set advanced training guidelines for massage therapists. However, it has proven difficult to establish a cohesive curriculum that is standardized across the country in continuing education programs.

The majority of continuing-education programs in massage therapy focus on teaching new treatment techniques. While it is valuable to learn new manual skills, these programs don't have time to focus on core competencies in pathology, kinesiology, clinical science, patient interaction skills, clinical reasoning, and other core skills of rehabilitation science.

The Solution: Advanced Credentialing

The NCBTMB has now found a way to address this challenge and at the same time provide a great service for many health care professionals and other stakeholders who are trying to validate the skills and knowledge of massage therapists. The board has partnered with Whitney Lowe and the Academy of Clinical Massage (www.academyofclinicalmassage.com), recognized leaders in clinical education for massage therapists, to offer a new Specialty Certificate in Clinical Rehabilitative Massage.

The goal in offering this new specialty certificate is to set a high standard of training for massage therapists that can be consistently applied across the country. The training was developed after

extensive input from clinical practitioners and other health care providers to establish a set of core competencies for clinical massage therapists.

Hopefully, this new credential will provide a greater degree of standardized training that can elevate the skills and abilities of massage therapists working in your chiropractic office.

Chiropractic Educators Weigh In

"Massage therapy is an effective tool in the management of many patients that present to Doctors of Chiropractic (DC), and many DCs employ or associate with licensed or Board Certified Massage Therapists in practice. Both professions, not to mention patients, will benefit from a nationally recognized and standardized Massage Therapy credential for advanced rehabilitative skills and abilities."

— *William Meeker, DC, MPH, President, Palmer College of Chiropractic*

"A partnership between a chiropractor and massage therapist is a wonderful thing, particularly when the massage therapist has received advanced training in clinical, rehabilitative techniques. A massage therapist who can deliver clinically oriented massage techniques will only complement the chiropractor's treatment goals. A standardized credential through the NCBTMB is a tool that chiropractors and other health care professionals can use to determine that a massage therapist has hands-on skills to meet the needs of patients who present with complex clinical cases."

— *Dale Healey, DC, PhD, Dean, College of Health and Wellness, Northwestern Health Sciences University*

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