

rmtao

ANNUAL REPORT 2018





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A Message from the **Board Chair and Executive Director**

Bridges span across rivers and seas, over train tracks, across roads and obstacles. Many of us cross bridges daily on our commutes to work, on trains or on walks. Bridges connect two disconnected places – two pieces of land, two parts of a city, two countries.

Bridges also connect people. Relationships are much like bridges – a connection supported from both sides. Building relationships, just as building bridges, takes time and effort from both parties. When you build a bridge between groups of people, you improve the relationship, which fosters teamwork and communication. This past year, we focused strongly on building relationships that connect massage therapists with patients, other health professionals, government, other stakeholders, and with each other.

We worked with specific patient population representatives to promote the benefits of massage therapy. We met with the Canadian Cancer Society, Multiple Sclerosis Society, Spinal Cord Injury Ontario, Hospice Palliative Care Ontario, Home Care Ontario, ALS Society of Canada and many more, to tell them how we can help their patient populations. Patients with specific conditions or illnesses can find symptom relief with massage therapy, which has been shown to lead to improved quality of life. Some of these patients may be unaware of how massage therapy can help them, or may be unsure how to access massage therapy treatments.

By working with these organizations, we can further our reach and spread the word about the specific benefits of massage therapy. We can make massage therapy more accessible to these populations and help improve their health and wellbeing.

Our members help people keep doing what they love, gain more independence, and try something new. We hear inspirational stories every day from patients whose lives have been positively impacted by massage therapy. All massage therapists have stories of how they have helped people, and we were honored to share some of these stories during Massage Therapy Awareness Week in October. We know first-hand how much massage therapy can achieve, and we work hard to help spread the word to make many more people aware too. It's not just an hour of relaxation; it's health care with amazing proven results that can positively impact someone's life.

The demand for massage therapy continues to grow. One of our goals is to improve access for massage therapy so that patients and potential patients can get the healthcare they want and need. We will achieve this goal by further integrating into healthcare teams, and being included in government healthcare initiatives, as well as settings such as hospitals, long-term care homes and hospices. All of this will help move the massage therapy profession towards complete integration into primary healthcare.





The most important bridge we started to build this year was to better connect us with the government. In the spring of 2018 we met with several MPPs and government representatives, and on November 26, 2018, we held our very first Queen’s Park Day. Teams of massage therapists met with numerous MPPs from all parties and other government representatives and policy makers. We focused on raising awareness about massage therapy and its place in healthcare. The Ontario government is looking for innovative solutions to the issues facing Ontario’s healthcare. The aging population of Baby Boomers is beginning to require more access to healthcare, Ontario is in the midst of an opioid epidemic, and mental health issues are finally getting the attention they deserve. Massage therapy has a role to play to help address these issues, and our focus was making sure the people with influence are aware of how massage therapy can help.

Physicians are increasingly recommending massage therapy as an alternative to opioids for chronic pain. Massage therapy can also help to address symptoms associated with cancer treatment or stress and anxiety. Massage therapy can be utilized to treat babies, patients in palliative care and at every stage in between. Massage therapy can be performed almost anywhere – in a clinic, a hospital bed or in someone’s home. We will continue to work to facilitate improved access to massage therapy treatments so that everyone can have access to the health care they want and need.

The most important bridges we can build are the network of bridges connecting this profession. By connecting massage therapists with each other, we are able to accomplish more than a single massage therapist can accomplish on their own.

This starts by building communities of RMTs that are engaged and passionate about this profession and committed to helping this profession grow and develop. Many RMTs work in fairly isolated practices, and it may often feel like there are gaps between an RMT’s day-to-day experience and the massage therapy profession as a whole. We are bridging these gaps by building opportunities for RMTs to connect locally, provincially and even nationally.

There are important changes happening in healthcare. We are making sure that massage therapy is a part of those changes. The RMTAO is the only organization working for Ontario Registered Massage Therapists, and everything we do is done for all massage therapists in Ontario. This year we have laid the groundwork for important relationships with government, the insurance industry, other health care organizations and the public. The bridges have been built, the connections have been solidified, and the commitment to work together has been made on both sides. We will continue to nurture these relationships and strengthen these bridges as we continue to advocate for the massage therapy profession.



Andrew Lewarne, RMT, CAE
Executive Director & CEO



Krystin Bokalo, BAHSc, CAT(C), RMT
Chair, Board of Directors



2018
Board of Directors



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Chair



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& CEO



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Communications and
Member Services Coordinator



Jill Haig
BSc, CAE
Manager
of Operations



Caitlin Ferguson
BA, MA
Member Services and
Education Administrator

membership

Growth

The RMTAO is an association of RMTs, working for RMTs, run by RMTs. All of the work we do is for our members, and we couldn't achieve all that we do without our members.

The numbers of Registered Massage Therapists that choose to be members of the RMTAO continues to grow. With that increase in support, we are able to more effectively advocate on behalf of our members.

Thank you to all of our returning members and welcome to our new members!

Value for Membership

RMTAO members gain access to many benefits, including a listing on RMTFind.com, a subscription to *Massage Therapy Today* magazine, The Friday File weekly e-newsletter, continuing education opportunities, and access to members-only resources including research, templates, and support.

In addition, RMTAO members can choose to pay for the programs that best suit their needs and interests with our flexible approach to membership. We have continued to evaluate the successes of our programs to ensure that the programs we offer best meet our members' needs.

Thank you to our corporate partners for helping to provide programs and services to RMTAO members.

2018 New Members

665

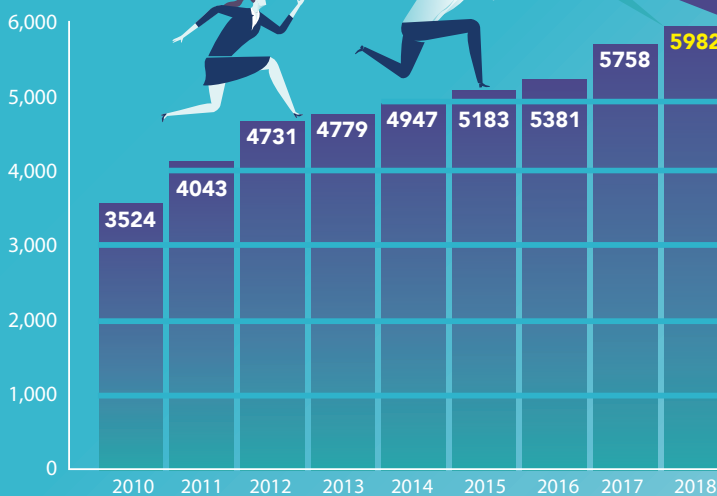
2018 New Life Members

33

Total Life Members

131

YEARLY NUMBER OF MEMBERS



Total Student Members

824



recognition

Member Recognition Dinner



The RMTAO hosted a **Member Recognition Dinner** on May 5, 2018 in Toronto. We invited individuals who have contributed to the Association such as committee volunteers, conference speakers, volunteer writers and Community-Based Network coordinators. Thank you again to all of our volunteers who have dedicated their time and effort to the RMTAO!

RMTAO Awards

We also recognized individuals who have made particularly significant contributions to the Association and the massage therapy profession. The annual **RMTAO Board of Directors Awards** were given out to three individuals in recognition of their achievements. Congratulations to our award winners!



RMT of the Year: Tracy Lovitt



Professional Service Award: Elizabeth Gibb



Educator of the Year: Jennifer Brennan







Student Case Report Contest

The RMTAO launched our first annual **Student Case Report Contest** in 2018. Students in massage therapy programs and new graduates across Ontario submitted insightful and innovative case reports.

Congratulations to our winners!

First Place: Ingrid Acebes and Stephanie Zadorozniak

Case Report: The Effects of Massage Therapy on Non-Specific Thoracic Outlet Syndrome
School: Humber College

Second Place: Colleen Johnson

Case Report: The Effects of Massage Therapy on Quality of Life and Foot Drop for a Person with Multiple Sclerosis: A Case Study
School: Trillium College, Kingston Campus

Third Place: Seunghee Seo

Case Report: Skin Temperature Changes in the Lower Limbs During Back Massage Therapy Treatment on Spinal Cord Injury Patient
School: Centennial College

The three winning abstracts will be published in the summer 2019 issue of *Massage Therapy Today* and the full case reports will be available in the resource area of the RMTAO website.

The DARE Challenge

SIX-WEEK CAMPAIGN

193
New Members

We asked our members to once again DARE their friends



and colleagues to join the RMTAO as members. As a direct result of this six-week campaign, we were able to welcome 193 new members! This is the most new members that we have welcomed during our DARE Campaign. Thank you to all our members who referred their colleagues, and welcome to all our new members!



education

New Webinars

The RMTAO was pleased to present a series of **three new webinars** focusing on charting skills. These webinars were free for members and offered by RMT and RMTAO member **Donald Dillon**. The series included:

- 1 The Case History, Our Experience of Pain, Precautions and Preclusions
- 2 Assessment Methods, Professional Opinion and Recording Treatment
- 3 Treatment Plans, Wellness Outcomes, and Charting Tips

These webinars sold out, and due to the overwhelmingly positive feedback we received, we will continue to run these webinars again in the future.



The RMTAO is also planning future webinars during the coming year focusing on topics such as personal and business finances, professional communication and privacy legislation. We are very excited to be diversifying our continuing education program by offering our members online options for education that they can access from anywhere.

Professional Development

In addition to launching a new webinar series, the RMTAO offered 33 additional courses in 2018.

The RMTAO offered 25 in-person courses focusing on assessment in 2018. These courses were taught by **Physiotherapist Aaron Rutter** and offered all across Ontario.

These courses are part of the **Certificate of Excellence in Assessment**. Congratulations to **Karen Dombroskie** and **Kimberly Bold** for earning the **Certificate of Excellence in Assessment** this year.

The RMTAO offered **Record Keeping Essentials** 5 times in 2018 with instructor **Amy Beggs**.

In partnership with Centennial College, the RMTAO offered the online course **Insurance Reimbursement for Massage Therapists: Working with Auto Insurance and WSIB Cases** 3 times in 2018.



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outreach

Community-Based Networks

Community-Based Networks (CBNs) are local groups of RMTs that meet to connect with peers, ask questions and discuss important issues in the massage therapy profession. The RMTAO reinvigorated our Community-Based Network program this year, offering Community-Based Network coordinators new resources and greater support to run strong groups in their communities.

There were 54 CBN meetings in communities across Ontario this year. Currently active CBNs include:

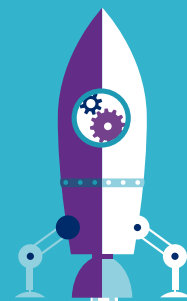
- Almaguin Highlands
- Barrie
- Brantford
- Bruce County
- Cambridge
- Deep River
- Durham Region
- Grey County
- Guelph
- Halton-Peel
- Hamilton
- Kingston
- Kitchener-Waterloo
- Leeds-Grenville
- London
- Mississauga
- Niagara
- Ottawa
- Sarnia
- Sault Ste. Marie
- Sudbury
- Thunder Bay
- Toronto Central
- Toronto East
- Toronto West
- Windsor
- Woodstock



School Ambassador Program

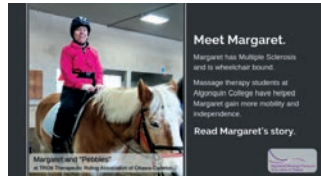
This year, the RMTAO launched a **School Ambassador Program**, where volunteer RMTs visit schools across Ontario to present the benefits of being a member of the RMTAO. School Ambassadors are provided with a student presentation, fact sheet and volunteer handbook.

Thank you to our dedicated volunteer School Ambassadors for making a total of 22 presentations to 18 schools across Ontario!



communication

The RMTAO launched two new social media campaigns this year – sharing patient stories during Massage Therapy Awareness Week, and infographics on specific conditions and patient populations.



Massage Therapy Awareness Week

Massage Therapy Awareness Week was celebrated October 21-27, 2018.

This year, the RMTAO highlighted stories of real people who have benefitted from massage therapy. Whether recovering from an illness or injury, gaining more independence, or trying something new, massage therapy has helped many people at all stages of life.

These stories were published on the RMTAO website and were posted to social media on Facebook and Twitter with the hashtag #massagehelps.

We shared 12 stories from unique patients across Canada. The Facebook posts were viewed **80,000** times and received over **3,000** reactions, comments and shares. Thank you to all of our members for sharing these incredible stories with your networks.



Infographics

The RMTAO designed a series of infographics to highlight the benefits of massage therapy for a variety of conditions and populations.

The topics of our infographics so far have included the benefits of massage therapy for:

- Temporomandibular Disorders
- Headaches and Migraines
- Carpal Tunnel Syndrome
- Pregnancy
- Arthritis
- Plantar Fasciitis
- Sleep
- Low Back Pain
- Seniors

These infographics are released monthly on our website, in **The Friday File** and on our social media channels to be shared with the public to promote the profession. The infographics were shared on Facebook and reached an average of almost **40,000** people per post. We will continue to create and distribute these infographics that can be shared across networks.



Social Media

In addition to these major public relations campaigns, the RMTAO posted relevant information almost daily. This year, the RMTAO increased post reach and engagement, reaching more people than ever before.

FACEBOOK PAGE LIKES

4,237

FACEBOOK POST SHARES
(AVERAGE PER POST)

39

FACEBOOK POST REACTIONS
(AVERAGE PER POST)

76

TWITTER FOLLOWERS

1,702

TWITTER LIKES
(MONTHLY AVERAGE)

128

TWITTER RETWEETS
(MONTHLY AVERAGE)

90

Articles in Trade Magazines

The RMTAO was able to facilitate the publication of a series of articles about the benefits of massage therapy for specific professions in a variety of trade magazines.

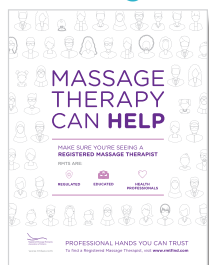
Articles were published in:

- Truck News
- Bakers Journal
- Canadian Pizza
- Canadian Contractor
- OBIA Review (Ontario Brain Injury Association magazine)

Thank you to our volunteer writers who helped to spread the word about the benefits of massage therapy for specific professions and conditions.



Massage Therapy Poster



The RMTAO developed a poster to promote massage therapy. This poster is available exclusively to RMTAO members as a free download and has been displayed in massage therapy practices and in local communities.

Massage Therapy Presentation

Many of our members have the opportunity to present at community groups or special events. The RMTAO created a presentation for members to use when presenting to the public. This presentation includes introductory information about massage therapy, massage therapists, and the types of conditions for which massage therapy is particularly effective. The presentation is available on the RMTAO website, exclusively for RMTAO members.

Massage Therapy Today



The RMTAO released four issues of *Massage Therapy Today: Putting Knowledge Into Practice*

The themes for this year were debunking massage therapy myths, remedial exercise, professional longevity and the neurophysiology of pain. The issues in the winter, spring and fall are sent to all RMTAO members, and the summer issue is sent to all RMTs in Ontario. The summer issue included information outlining the benefits of membership.

The Friday File

The Friday File e-newsletter continues to be a weekly source of news, research and information for RMTAO members.



The Friday File provides updates about the massage therapy profession and the activities of the association, and shares relevant research, practice resources and news articles.

the
Friday File

Sent weekly to over

6,500
Members & Partners

advocacy

Queen's Park Day



The RMTAO held our first Queen's Park Day on Monday, November 26, 2018.

Thirty RMTAO representatives and RMTAO members took over Queen's Park for the day. **Robin Martin MPP**, one of the Parliamentary Assistants to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, spoke to the group about



increased funding and support to treat mental health and addictions, and the role of massage therapy in the treatment of chronic pain and mental health associated with the provincial opioid crisis.

France Gélinas MPP, the NDP Health Critic, spoke about massage therapy in the treatment of low back pain,

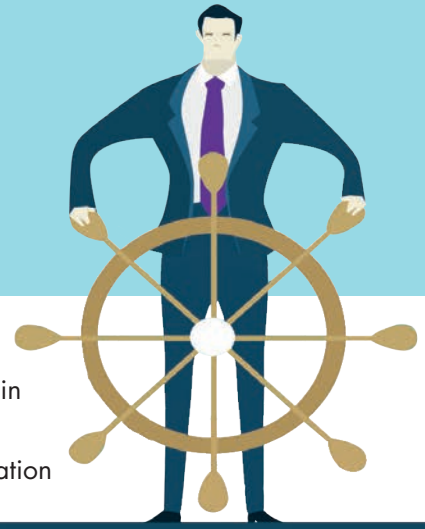
hospice and home care, and addressing the opioid crisis.

Throughout the day, our volunteers met with **Members of Provincial Parliament (MPPs)** across all



political parties to discuss the benefits of massage therapy and the role that RMTs can play in health care. These meetings have helped to lay the groundwork to work towards ensuring that RMTs are top of mind when it comes to government funded health care initiatives. We will build upon this momentum in our government relations strategy to maintain positive relationships with government stakeholders.





Provincial Advocacy

- Meetings with representatives from the **Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care** to discuss the role of massage therapy in primary health care.
- Meetings with representatives from the **Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport** to discuss the role of massage therapy in concussion management.
- Meetings with **Members of Provincial Parliament** from all parties to discuss the role of massage therapy in health care.
- Meetings with the organizations representing both **public and private schools** with massage therapy programs relating to curriculum.
- Active participation with the **Coalition Representing Health Professionals in Automobile Insurance Services**, relating specifically to

health care fraud in the motor vehicle accident rehabilitation process.

- Engaging with partners in the **Coalition of Ontario Regulated Health Professional Associations** to discuss regulatory modernization and its impact on health professionals in Ontario.
- Engagement with the **College of Massage Therapists of Ontario** relating to new standards of practice, the new quality assurance program, and registration fee increases.



Stakeholder Meetings

RMTAO Executive Director & CEO, **Andrew Lewarne**, met with representatives from several relevant organizations to discuss the benefits of massage therapy for their specific populations. The discussions focused on working together to promote the massage therapy profession, and we have had many of these organizations promote massage therapy to their patient populations.



These meetings included the following organizations:

- ALS Society of Canada
- Canadian Association of Retired Persons
- Canadian Cancer Society
- Home Care Ontario
- Hospice Palliative Care Ontario
- Local Health Integration Network (Toronto Central)
- Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada
- Ontario Long Term Care Association
- Parkinson Canada
- Spinal Cord Injury Ontario

In each of these meetings, the RMTAO provided evidence to support the use of massage therapy for specific relevant populations to these organizations.

This information has been used to create or update marketing materials, update clinical practice guidelines and share information about massage therapy with their audiences.

National Advocacy

The RMTAO continued in our leadership role with the **Canadian Massage Therapist Alliance (CMTA)**, and through that role we were able to assist in the advancement of several national priorities including:

- Participation in the **Organizations for Health Action (HEAL) Lobby Day** on Parliament Hill on November 1, 2018, to release **The Canadian Way 2.0**, a consensus statement outlining the recommendations to the federal government relating to healthcare, and to speak with Ministers, Members of Parliament, and other federal government representatives.
- Meeting with **Canadian Life and Health Insurance Association (CLHIA)** to discuss the insurance audit process, insurance reimbursement to massage therapy students in unregulated provinces, and the potential of reviving the **Professional Credentialing Tracking Program**.
- Meetings with a variety of **insurance companies** relating to the inclusion of massage therapy in extended health benefits and the educational materials they provide to their clients.



- Contributed to the development of a new **Strategic Plan for the CMTA**, with a focus on public and government relations.
- Drafted a position paper for the CMTA regarding students practicing prior to graduation in certain unregulated provinces
- Provision of resources to the **Association of New Brunswick Massage Therapists** to support the inclusion of RMTs in the **Seniors Care Pilot Project** in that province.
- Provision of background and research resources to the **Massage Therapist Association of Alberta** to assist in their lobbying efforts towards regulation.
- Consultation with the **Prince Edward Island Massage Therapy Association** relating to their progress towards regulation.
- Continued engagement with a government relations firm to work towards HST exemption for **Registered Massage Therapists**.

- Working with the **Canadian Massage Therapy Council for Accreditation** to ensure standardized accreditation for massage therapy programs across Canada.





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Association of Ontario