

2019 Annual Report

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If you think in terms
of a year, plant a seed; if in
terms of ten years, plant trees;
if in terms of 100 years,
teach people.

–Confucius

Chair of the Board of Directors

In 2019 we celebrated 100 years of massage therapy regulation in Ontario. We took this opportunity to look back at where the massage therapy profession began and how far we've come. More importantly, we looked forward to see how much further this profession can go. Recognition for massage therapy has grown and evolved over the past 100 years from a small profession that worked under the supervision of physicians and rarely collaborated with other health professionals to an integrated and respected part of today's health care teams. Looking forward, there are opportunities for further integration into the healthcare system, expansion of our research base and increasing access to care for the many Ontarians who can benefit from massage therapy.

This theme of growth and change carried through to the RMTAO in 2019. We introduced a national tax exemption campaign in March, launched a new website and association management software in July, and had a change in leadership. We look forward to continuing to evolve and to being able to better serve our members and to advocate on behalf of all Registered Massage Therapists in Ontario.

While celebrating the profession's past we continued to reach essential milestones that will set the direction for the profession's future. When massage therapy was regulated in Prince Edward Island in March 2019, becoming the fifth Canadian province to regulate massage therapy, we made the campaign to obtain tax exemption for the massage therapy profession our main focus. A formal application for tax exemption can be made to the federal Minister of Finance after a profession is regulated in five provinces, and we have been busy this year laying the necessary groundwork so that we can have a strong case once we are able to make our formal application.

With our partners in the Canadian Massage Therapist Alliance (CMTA), we launched RMTACT.ca, which acts as a hub for the tax exemption campaign. Over 7,000 RMTs across Canada have signed up on RMT/ACT to show their support, and the more RMTs who support the campaign, the stronger our case will be. The campaign itself is constantly growing and developing, and we will continue to use RMT/ACT to share new information and opportunities for engagement. Obtaining tax exemption for massage therapy is expected to be a two to five year process, and the only way we can be successful is with your continued support.

Tax exemption is a national initiative, so we have continued to strengthen our relationships with our partner associations in other provinces. RMTs across Canada will have a vital role to play in the fight for tax exemption, and, like the RMTAO, all association members of the Canadian Massage Therapist Alliance have been reaching out to their members with updates and requests for support. By working together with RMTs and associations across Canada, we are able to use the collective talents of the massage therapy profession across the country to develop a compelling case for tax exemption. We are able to present a united front when we make our request to the federal Minister of Finance, and advocate effectively for massage therapy as a valuable, evidence-based health care profession. Although we are celebrating 100 years of accomplishment for the massage therapy profession in Ontario, each province and territory has their own rich history of massage therapy, and the accomplishment of obtaining tax exemption will be a national victory.

Creating effective partnerships has always been essential to our success as a profession. Whether it's our national partnerships that will help us to succeed in obtaining tax exemption, or our partnerships with other regulated health professionals in Ontario to ensure that we are part of the larger health

From the RMTAO

care decisions, by working together with people who have similar goals, we are more likely to be successful. Health care continues to move to a more collaborative model and we continue to ensure massage therapists remain a part of that collaboration. As an Association, it's also important that we work with the regulator, and over the past year, our relationship with the College of Massage Therapists of Ontario (CMTO) has continued to strengthen. We met regularly with the CMTO to share information and discuss issues of mutual concern such as the new quality assurance program. The decisions of the CMTO affect the professional lives of all RMTs, and the RMTAO ensures that the voice of RMTs is heard during those decision-making processes.

Throughout all the changes, advancements and new ideas in health care over the past 100 years, the massage therapy profession not only persevered, but flourished. Looking to the future, the profession will continue to flourish as we work hard to advocate for all RMTs in Ontario, and provide our members with the programs and services they need. We'll work to ensure that your Association continues to evolve. We will continue to work with our national partners to fight for tax exemption, which will be a significant milestone for our profession. The ability of the massage therapy profession to thrive over the past 100 years has been due to the dedication and passion of RMTs, and it is with that same dedication and passion that the RMTAO will continue to effectively represent you for years to come.



Krystin Bokalo

Chair of the Board of Directors

Registered Massage Therapists' Association of Ontario

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Krystin Bokalo, BAHSc., CAT(C), RMT, Chair
- Jennifer Hewitt, RMT, Vice Chair
- Victoria Johnson, RMT, Secretary
- Melanie Levesque, BSc, RMT, MBA, Director
- Darren Nixon, RMT, Director
- Stacey Shipwright, BA (Hons), RMT, Director
- Darren T. Stevens, BPHE, MA, RMT, Director
- Mary Tzianias, RMT, RRP, Director

RMTAO STAFF

- Jill Haig, BSc (Hons), CAE, Director of Operations
- Laura Fixman, BAA (Hons), Manager of Communications
- Caitlin Ferguson, BA (Hons), MA, Membership and Education Coordinator



MEMBERSHIP

Membership Growth

The RMTAO continues to gain momentum and move forward on important initiatives. However, we wouldn't be successful in our goals without the wonderful support of our members. We would like to thank our returning members for their support and our new members for choosing to join their professional association.

We've continued to steadily increase our membership in 2019, and the more members we represent, the more effectively we can advocate on behalf of the massage therapy profession.

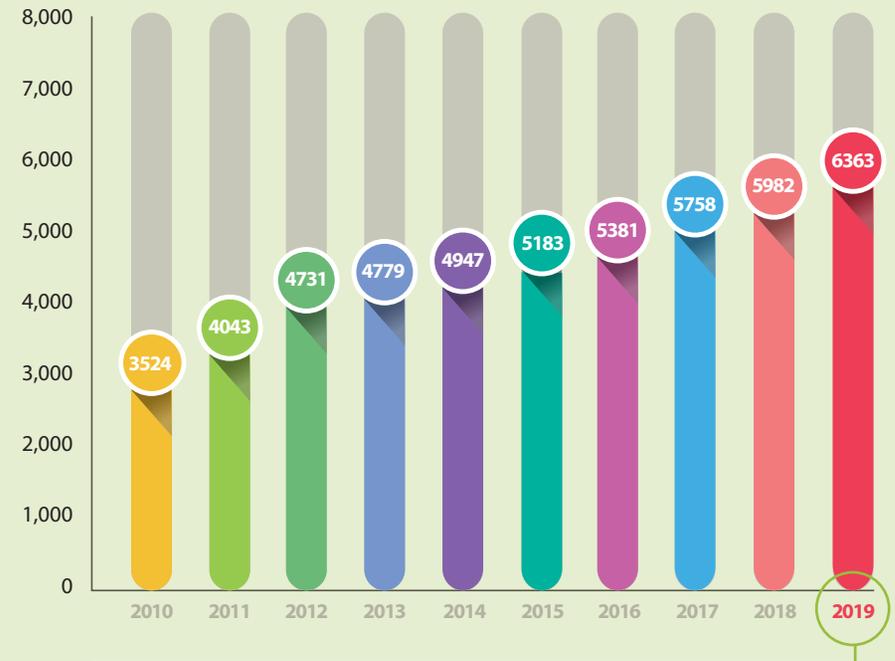
MEMBER PROGRAMS

There are a lot of benefits to RMTAO membership including a free RMTFind listing, a subscription to our magazine *Massage Therapy Today*, continuing education opportunities and access to various resources to help your practice grow. Members can still pick and choose to pay for the programs and services that work best for them with our flex membership model.

We would like to thank all of our program partners for continuing to provide our members with beneficial programs and services.



MEMBERS BY THE NUMBERS



2019 – New Members 404

2019 – Life Members **152**

2019 – Student Members **1047**



EDUCATION

RMTAO Conference

The RMTAO held our biennial conference on June 1, 2019 in Toronto. The theme of the conference was the biospsychosocial model of pain.

We welcomed nearly 200 attendees who chose from courses in the biological, psychological or social streams. We also featured two engaging keynotes, Dr. Dacher Keltner who spoke about the science of compassion, and Dr. Melanie Noel who spoke about how the memory of pain in childhood affects future pain experiences.

Thank you to everyone who attended our conference this year.





PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The focus for the RMTAO professional development program this year was to develop engaging webinars so that our members could learn valuable information from the comfort of their own homes.

In the first half of 2019, we introduced a series of financial literacy webinars taught by Financial Literacy and Credit Counsellor Pamela George. These webinars covered important topics such as HST, budgeting, personal and business finances, credit scores, paying off debt, and saving for the future.

We also offered a webinar on Client Health Records, offered for free to members by lawyer Lad Kucis. This webinar provided members with a review of the RMT's obligations regarding the protection of client records, and the legislation that governs these obligations.

This webinar covered the legislation and policies that RMTs must follow as health information custodians in order to protect their patients' privacy, and Kucis answered questions about disclosing personal health information.

We also continued to offer in-person courses across Ontario, and ran ten assessment courses with physiotherapist Aaron Rutter in 2019.



RECOGNITION

RMTAO Awards

Immediately following the conference, the RMTAO held our Awards Dinner to recognize several outstanding RMTs who have made significant contributions to the profession and to the Association.



CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR AWARD WINNERS:

Lori Copeland
Professional Service Award



Greg Shortt
Educator of the Year



Karyn Hughes
RMT of the Year in Remembrance of Ken Rezsnyak

STUDENT CASE REPORT CONTEST

The RMTAO ran our second annual Student Case Report Contest in 2019. Massage therapy students and new graduates across Ontario submitted insightful and innovative case reports.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR WINNERS!

FIRST PLACE: Minh Amanda Chu and Alexia Emslie
Effects of Massage Therapy on Concussion Related Symptoms • School: Humber College

SECOND PLACE: Ashley Slaney and Madeline Hunt
Impact of Massage Therapy on Premenstrual Syndrome and Primary Dysmenorrhea • School: Humber College

CONNECTION

Community-Based Networks

The RMTAO facilitates Community-Based Networks (CBNs) so that our members are able to connect with their local peers to ask questions, share information, seek support, socialize and build a sense of community. We continued to regularly connect with our CBN coordinators this year to provide guidance and insight when needed.

This year there were 71 meetings held in communities across Ontario.

Currently active CBNs include:

- Barrie
- Brantford
- Bruce County
- Cambridge
- Durham Region
- Etobicoke
- Grey County
- Guelph
- Halton-Peel
- Hamilton
- Kingston
- Kitchener-Waterloo
- Leeds-Grenville
- London
- Niagara
- Ottawa

- Peterborough
- Quinte
- Sault Ste. Marie
- Sudbury
- Thunder Bay
- Toronto East
- Toronto West
- Windsor

SCHOOL AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

The RMTAO continued our School Ambassador program this year, sending RMT volunteers to schools across Ontario to teach students about the benefits of RMTAO membership and to highlight some of the RMTAO's more recent advocacy initiatives.

Thank you to our committed School Ambassadors for making well-received and engaging presentations to schools in 2019.

REFLECTION ON OUR HISTORY

A Look Back on 100 Years of Massage Therapy Regulation

2019 marked 100 years of regulation of the massage therapy profession in Ontario. This is a significant milestone for our profession. We have grown as a profession in leaps and bounds over the past 100 years, and have gained a respected place in Ontario's health care landscape.



Massage therapy was first regulated in Ontario under the Drugless Practitioners Act of 1919. From its beginnings as a small emerging profession that gained increased prominence treating wounded soldiers after World War I, the massage therapy profession has transformed into an increasingly recognized and respected health care profession that can help a wide range of patients.

Before the Drugless Practitioners Act of 1919, the training, knowledge, and experience of massage therapists in Ontario varied a great deal. The introduction of the Drugless Practitioners Act meant that massage therapists had to meet certain standards of training as well as pass an exam to prove they were qualified to practice. A separate register of massage therapy and physiotherapy practitioners was established in 1925, and in 1935 massage therapists received their own distinct organization to govern the profession.

The Board of Directors of Masseurs was established in 1935 to govern the profession, but it wasn't until the following year that massage therapists got

an advocate for their interests. Associated Masseurs, the first predecessor to the Registered Massage Therapists' Association of Ontario (RMTAO), was established in 1936 to advocate on behalf of the massage therapy profession and although it has undergone many name changes over the years, the



RMTAO still works hard to advocate for Ontario massage therapists.

When massage therapy was first regulated, there was a focus on the rehabilitation of injured soldiers returning from World War I. After the war, there was a shift in focus to treating people with polio to help restore some function and helping to rehabilitate victims of both industrial accidents and increasingly common automobile accidents. Today, RMTs help people cope with the physical symptoms of anxiety, recover after a sports injury, relieve some of the aches and pains associated with aging or with pregnancy, recover after surgery, and much more.



The introduction of the Regulated Health Professions Act of 1991 and the establishment of the College of Massage Therapists of Ontario (CMTO) brought further recognition to the massage therapy profession in Ontario. The last 100 years of regulation have brought about a lot of

changes in the massage therapy profession, but there is still further to go. We will continue to develop further massage therapy research and ensure that the massage therapy profession continues to be recognized as a valid, evidence-based health care option.

100 years ago, the newly regulated massage therapists likely could not imagine how far their profession would have come by 2019. We went from being fairly isolated and working under the direction of physicians, to an integral part of health care teams. Over the years we were recognized more and more as a health care option that can help relieve musculoskeletal discomfort for people of all ages and stages. Although we can only speculate on what the next 100 years will look like for the massage therapy profession, we know that we will continue to change and evolve, just as health care continues to change and evolve, and meet all the challenges our profession will face now and in the future.



Celebrating 100 years of regulation – Social Media Campaign



To celebrate this landmark occasion of 100 years of massage therapy regulation, the RMTAO created a social media campaign highlighting important events in the history of the massage therapy profession.

Over the course of the summer, we shared these posts to our social media channels

using the hashtag #MT100years, and they reached thousands of RMTs to celebrate this milestone for the profession.

From its beginnings as a way to rehabilitate injured soldiers, through changes in techniques, equipment and standards of practice, these posts were a way to highlight how far the massage therapy profession has come and how RMTs today are a valuable and integrated part of health care.

Thank you to all of our members who shared these posts with your networks.

A YEAR OF GROWTH

New Website

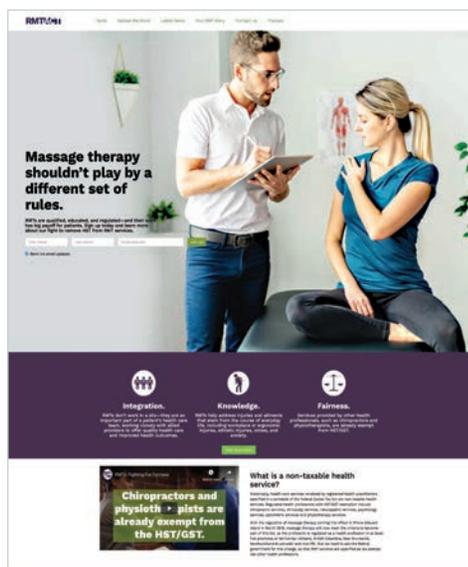
The RMTAO launched our new website in July of 2019. This website includes a refreshed modern design that is easier to navigate and presents a professional image to the public.

In addition to the website, we launched a new internal association management system. We have continued to offer the same services and support, just with a new look. While we continue with the transition, we look forward to continuing to build upon our new system.

We would like to thank all our members for their support during our transition to our new system.



Tax Exemption – RMT/ACT



Massage Therapy was regulated in Prince Edward Island on March 1, 2019. This means that massage therapy is now regulated in five provinces –

- Ontario
- British Columbia
- Newfoundland & Labrador
- New Brunswick
- Prince Edward Island

The federal Ministry of Finance requires at least five provinces to regulate massage therapy before we are able to make a formal application for tax exemption, so once a fifth province was regulated, we could begin the formal

campaign with our partners in the Canadian Massage Therapist Alliance (CMTA). We launched RMTACT.ca, a hub for the tax exemption campaign. Thousands of RMTs across Ontario signed up for updates on this site, and our members have been very supportive as we've used this site to launch educational materials and opportunities for engagement. With your support and your engagement on this site we were able to build the necessary foundation to begin making a strong case to the newly elected federal government.

We will continue to use RMT/ACT to share updates of our lobbying efforts, provide further opportunities for engagement, and post educational material in support of the campaign.

We've made some significant progress in the tax exemption process this year, thanks to the support of our engaged members.

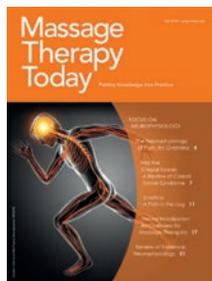
Communications

MASSAGE THERAPY TODAY

The RMTAO released four issues of Massage Therapy Today in 2019.

The themes for this year included the biopsychosocial model of pain, finance, back pain and communication.

The winter, spring and fall issues were sent to all RMTAO members, and the summer issue was sent to all RMTs in Ontario. The summer issue also contained information about how to join the RMTAO and the benefits of membership.



Facebook Page Likes	5,185
Facebook Post Engagement (Monthly)	2,100
(Reactions, comments, shares)	
Twitter Followers	1,793
Twitter Likes (Monthly Average)	200
Twitter Retweets (Monthly average)	110

SOCIAL MEDIA

The RMTAO posts relevant information to social media regularly, including important research, practical resources and news that affects the massage therapy profession. We continue to expand our reach and have increased engagement with our posts this year.



the Friday File

The Friday File e-newsletter continues to be sent weekly to our members and partners for updates on Association activities, highlights of practical resources and news that impacts the massage therapy profession. The Friday File remains a trusted source for updates relating to the massage therapy profession.

Communications

ARTICLES IN PARTNER MAGAZINES

The RMTAO continued to include articles in various external publications this year.

The RMTAO collaborated this year with the Ontario Dental Hygienists' Association (ODHA) to publish a series of articles in the ODHA magazine relating to the benefits of massage therapy for both dental hygienists and their patients.

We also collaborated with the trade magazine Firefighting in Canada to publish an article about the ways massage therapy and remedial exercise can help treat and prevent work related musculoskeletal injuries in firefighters.

We continue to partner with external magazines to share articles, with more articles planned for 2020.



Massage Therapy Awareness Week

The RMTAO celebrated Massage Therapy Awareness Week this year from October 20-26, 2019.

We used this as an opportunity to profile RMTs who work in unique environments and with diverse patient populations. This included RMTs who have worked in hospitals, with sports teams, and in other countries. It also included RMTs who have worked with patients with complex conditions.



These stories, which were posted daily on our social media channels during Massage Therapy Awareness Week, remain on the RMTAO website. They reached thousands of people, and were shared by record numbers of members using the hashtag #RMThelps, to show the different ways RMTs have helped people across Ontario. These Facebook posts reached over 28,000 people and received over 1,600 shares, comments and reactions. Thank you to our members who shared their stories, and to everyone who shared these posts to increase awareness of how massage therapy can help.



Advocacy

Although our advocacy focus this year has been on tax exemption, which is a federal initiative, we continue to advocate for the massage therapy profession at both a provincial and federal level. Our advocacy activities this year have included:

- Continued Engagement with the Coalition Representing Health Professionals in Auto Insurance regarding accident benefits, improvements to HCAI and a focus on prioritizing care.
- Meetings with several MPPs as a result of the 2018 Queen’s Park engagement.
- Launching RMTACT.ca as a hub for our tax exemption campaign providing opportunities to engage, resources to share and campaign updates.
- Engagement with the College of Massage Therapists of Ontario (CMTO) regarding the new quality assurance program and other items of mutual concern.
- Continued participation in the Organizations for Health Action (HEAL) to advocate for national health care issues
- Involvement with the Coalition of Ontario Regulated Health Professional Associations (CORHPA)
- Maintained a leadership role in the Canadian Massage Therapist Alliance (CMTA)
- Meeting with representatives from the insurance industry to ensure RMTs continue to be fairly covered by extended health benefits plans.





Registered Massage Therapists'
Association of Ontario

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