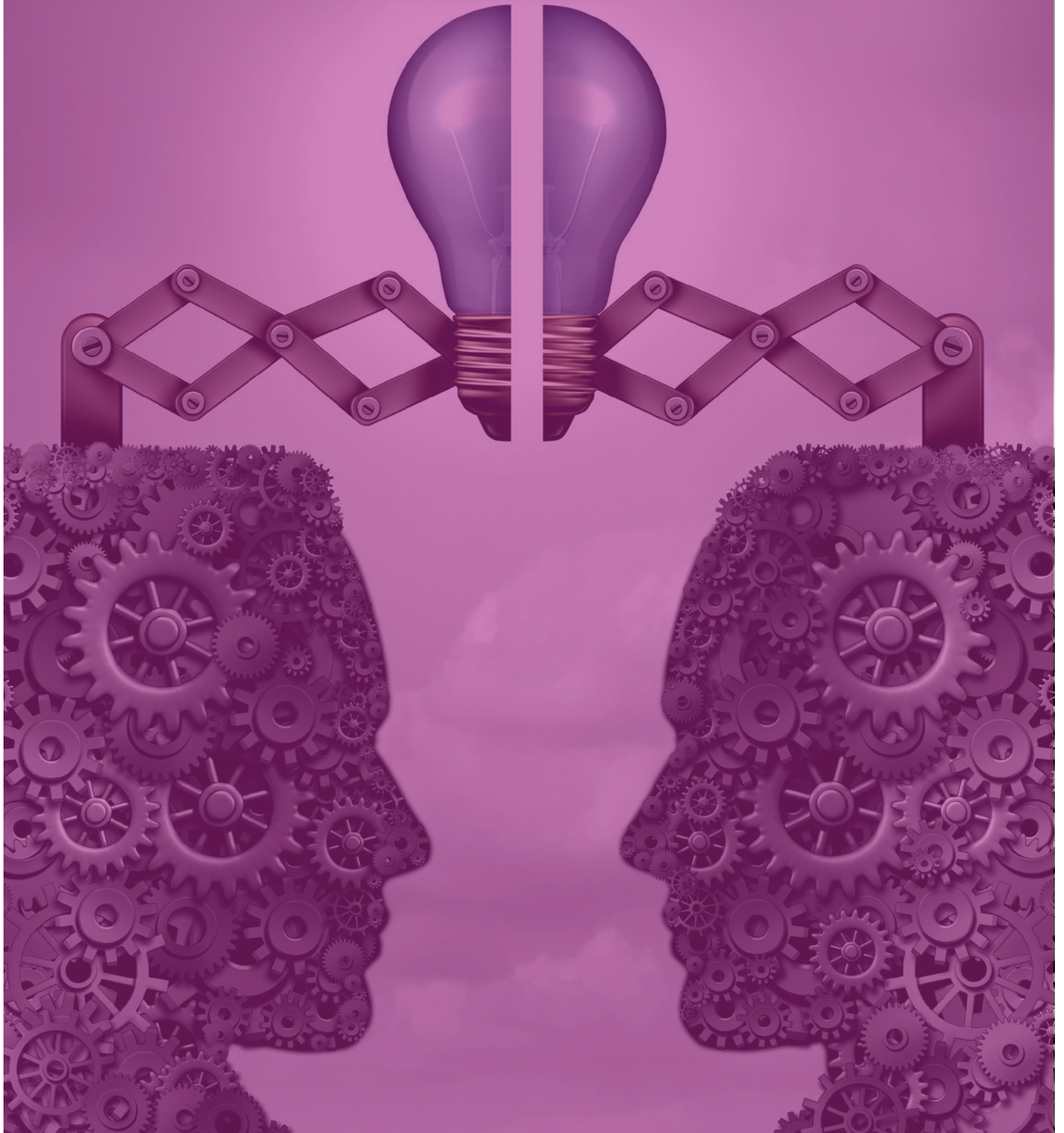




RMTAO
2017 • ANNUAL REPORT



Vision

To advance the profession of massage therapy as an integral component of health care.

Mission

To provide leadership and advocacy to an engaged and united profession

Who We Are

The Registered Massage Therapists' Association of Ontario (RMTAO) is a member-driven, not-for-profit professional association for Registered Massage Therapists (RMTs) in Ontario. The RMTAO exists in order to advance the profession of massage therapy in Ontario.

What We Do

The RMTAO advocates on behalf of the profession of massage therapy and provides resources and opportunities to help RMTs improve their knowledge, navigate the latest research and grow their practices. The RMTAO undertakes a large number of activities on behalf of all RMTs intended to increase the awareness of RMTs as regulated health professionals, to ensure fair access to the services of an RMT by all Ontarians, and to increase the status of massage therapists in the healthcare landscape.



Registered Massage Therapists'
Association of Ontario

Table of Contents

From the RMTAO

- ② Message from the Chair and Executive Director
- ④ 2017 Board of Directors
- ④ RMTAO Staff

Unite

- ⑤ Membership by the Numbers
- ⑥ The DARE Challenge
- ⑥ Value for Membership
- ⑦ Member Survey

Connect

- ⑧ Awards and Recognition
- ⑨ 2017 Conference: Excellence in Practice
- ⑩ Massage Therapy Educator Day

Discover

- ⑩ The Learning Curve
- ⑪ Community-Based Networks

Communicate

- ⑫ The RMTAO Online
- ⑬ Social Media
- ⑭ Massage Therapy Awareness Week
- ⑭ The Friday File
- ⑭ Massage Therapy Today

Advocate

- ⑮ Provincial Advocacy
- ⑯ National Advocacy

Message from the Chair and Executive Director

2017 was a year focused on moving forward. The RMTAO has evolved into a more proactive, collaborative and effective organization. We have been actively identifying priority areas for the massage therapy profession, and taking the necessary actions to address these areas.

A large part of what we do is advocate for the profession of massage therapy in Ontario. This means we're a part of the important conversations with the government, other health care professionals, the insurance industry, the regulator, and other stakeholders. We work on behalf of all RMTs in Ontario to ensure that the profession of massage therapy is an integral component of healthcare and that Massage Therapists are recognized, respected, and viable.

Many of our big picture priorities, such as increasing our research base, being included in healthcare initiatives, increasing massage therapy coverage in extended health benefits plans, and revoking the requirement for massage therapists to charge tax, are incredibly important and require large commitments of time, energy, and support. These goals cannot be achieved by a single action or by a single person. However, reaching these goals is possible. They can be achieved through the support and cooperation of all RMTs across Ontario and Canada. By uniting together and building on our collective strengths, and making opportunities instead of waiting for them, we can achieve these goals and we can make this profession prominent, significant, and influential. Together, we can realize these goals. And we have already started.

Through our leadership position with the Canadian Massage Therapist Alliance (CMTA), we joined Organizations for Health Action (HEAL), the largest health care professions lobbying group in Canada. As members of HEAL, we were able to join the fight against the proposed taxation of extended health care benefits, which was withdrawn in part due to the concentrated efforts of HEAL members. This is just one concrete example of the type of positive change that can happen when working together.

Health care is increasingly team-based, with government initiatives focusing on bringing health care professionals together to make a stronger community for patients. This team-based approach ensures that the right care is available at the right time. Massage therapists are increasingly working with other health professionals in clinics, hospitals, long-term care homes, sports teams and many other settings. The RMTAO will continue to work to make sure that there is a place for massage therapy on these health care teams in this changing health care environment.

To ensure we keep our spot on these teams, we need to ensure that massage therapy practices are based on and informed by the latest and best available evidence and research. The RMTAO will continue to provide our members access to relevant full-text journal articles through our research database access. We have been encouraged by the positive responses of our members who are using this member benefit to enhance their practices. Evidence-informed care centered on the needs of the patient is the focus of the future of health care and massage therapy needs to be a part of that future. The RMTAO will continue to support our members so that they are prepared and able to embrace the future.

This year, Bill 87, *Protecting Patients Act, 2017*, was passed and introduced with the goal of eradicating sexual abuse of patients in all regulated health professions in Ontario. In response to this new legislation, the College of Massage Therapists of Ontario (CMTO) drafted new Standards for Maintaining Professional Boundaries and Preventing Sexual Abuse to ensure massage therapist compliance and alignment with the act. As part of the consultation with the CMTO, the RMTAO Board of Directors provided a letter to the CMTO outlining six specific concerns. The CMTO amended the draft standards in five of the six areas, and we continued to work with the CMTO by providing further feedback after the release of the new standards. The RMTAO is committed to reducing barriers to patient care and to encouraging communication that reinforces the professionalism of massage therapists.

We base all that we do on the feedback, needs and concerns of our members. This year our engaged members came together at our Annual General Meeting, at our Education Conference, at our Massage Therapy Educator Day, and in Community-Based Networks across the province. We had the biggest conference turnout in recent history, where attendees connected with their peers, learned from each other, shared stories and laughs. It's this coming together that makes us stronger as individual practitioners and as a profession as a whole.

The RMTAO works to increase and improve the profile and perception of massage therapy. As part of our strategic public and government relations plan, we are working to make sure that Ontarians know what massage therapy is and how it can help them. Initiatives, like our series of videos and articles developed for Massage Therapy Awareness Week, will help to raise awareness about massage therapy.

RMTs are remarkable health professionals that help people from all walks of life with a vast array of health needs. We hear stories every day of the great work that massage therapists are able to do to improve their patients' lives. From easing pain, gaining movement, or reducing stress, the benefits of massage therapy are countless and tremendous. We want to make sure you can keep doing what you love. We help you so that you can keep helping others.



Andrew Lewarne,
RMT, CAE
Executive Director & CEO



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

2017 Board of Directors



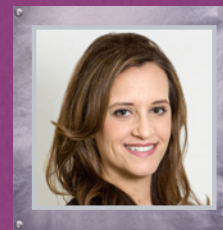
Krystin Bokalo,
BAHSc, CAT(C), RMT
Chair



Juliana Fernandes, RMT
Vice Chair



Darren Nixon, RMT
Secretary



Jennifer Bloch, RMT
Director



Dan Carell, RMT
Director



Tania Hashiguchi, RMT
Director



Jennifer Hewitt, RMT
Director



Karyn Hughes, BSocSc, RMT
Director



Darren Stevens,
BPHE, MA, RMT
Director

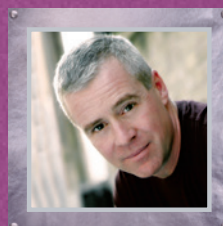


Victoria Johnson, RMT
Director



Debbie Wilcox, RMT
Director

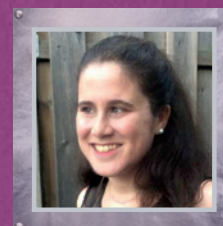
RMTAO Staff



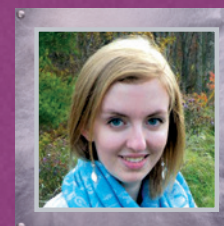
Andrew Lewarne,
RMT, CAE
Executive Director
& CEO



Jill Haig, BSc, CAE
Manager of
Operations



Laura Fixman,
BAA, DipJourn
Communication and
Member Services
Coordinator



Caitlin Ferguson, BA, MA
Member Services
Administrator

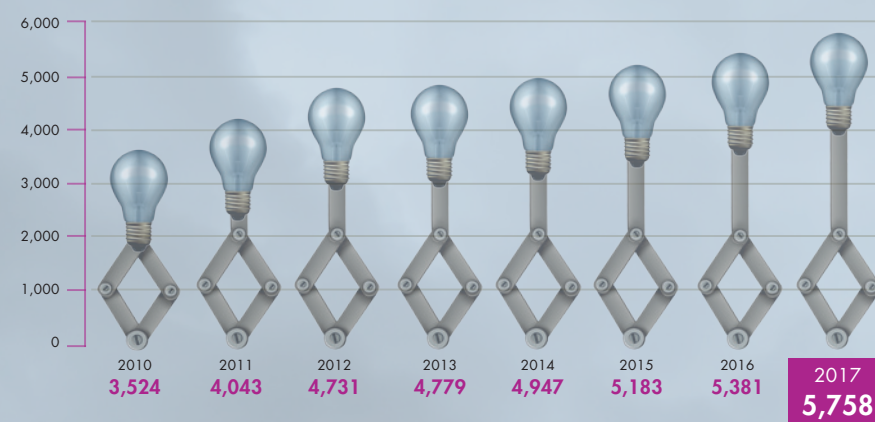
Membership

The RMTAO is a member-driven and member-governed organization. We act as the voice of all Ontario RMTs when advocating to the government, insurance industry, regulator and other stakeholders.

We represent the best interests of all RMTs in Ontario, but it is only with the support and dedication of our members that we are able to successfully act as the advocate for Ontario RMTs.

The number of RMTAO members has continued to grow, with 626 new members this year. Thank you to all of our members for their continued support, and welcome to our new members!"

Membership by the Numbers



Lifetime Members

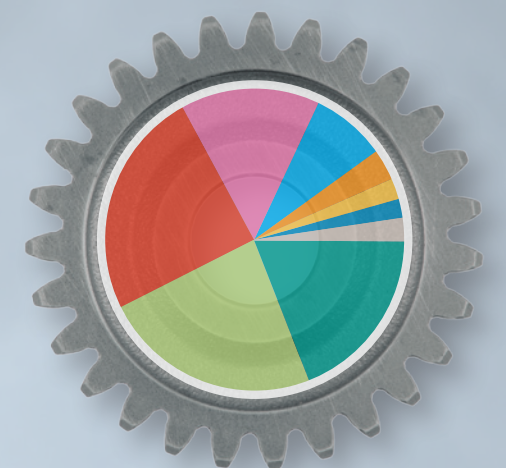


779 Student Members

The RMTAO was pleased to make 17 presentations to massage therapy students about the RMTAO and the benefits of membership to 15 schools across Ontario.

How long have our members been a part of the association?

Years of Membership	Number of Members	Percentage of Total Members
Less than 3	1,096	19.0
4 to 6	1,361	23.6
7 to 9	1,409	24.5
10 to 12	860	15.0
13 to 15	461	8.0
16 to 18	205	3.5
19 to 21	113	2.0
22 to 24	113	2.0
25 or more	140	2.4

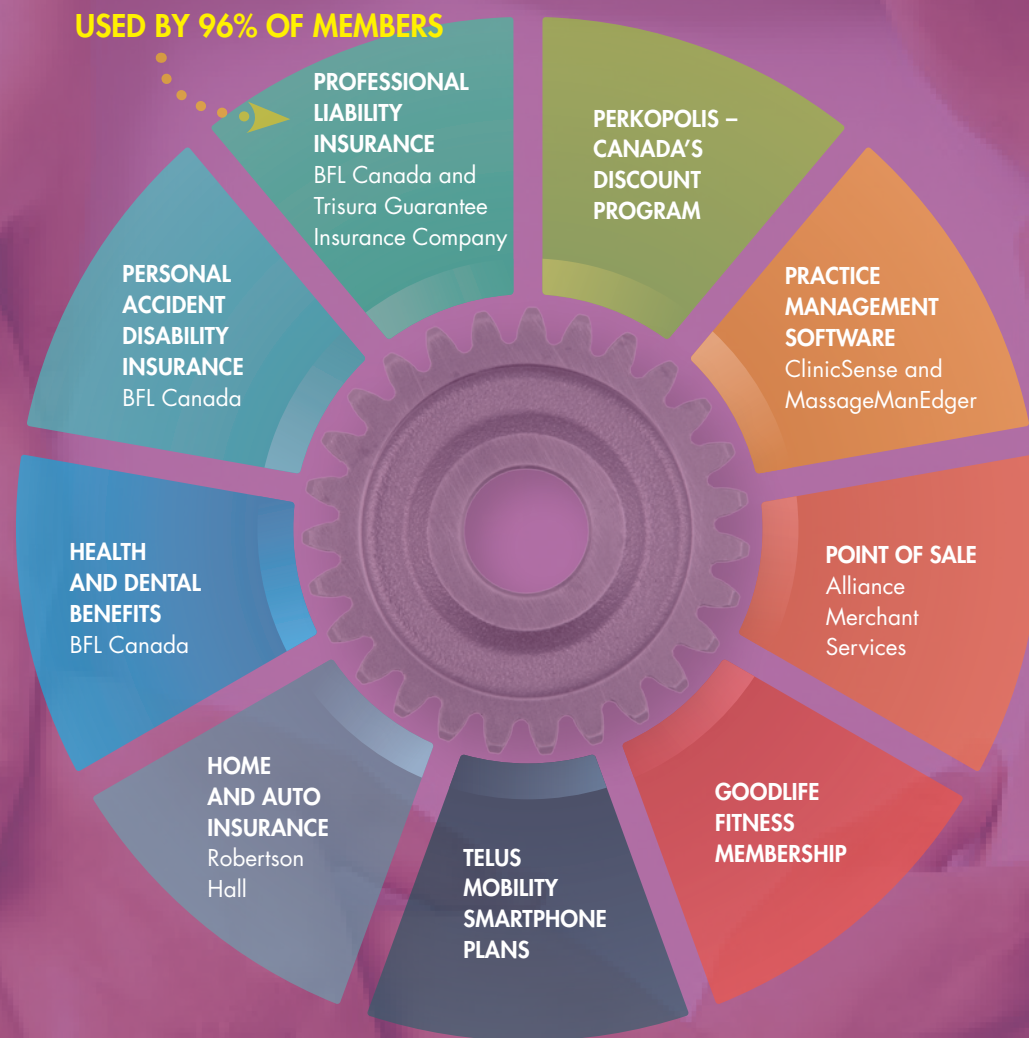


The DARE Challenge

In 2017 we once again asked our members to DARE their colleagues to join the RMTAO, and they stepped up to the challenge. Thanks to the efforts of our dedicated members, 165 new members joined the RMTAO in the month and a half long DARE Challenge campaign. More members than ever before dared their colleagues to join the association, and they continue to refer their colleagues even after the end of the official contest. Thank you to our members for your dedication and welcome to the new members of the association.



Value for Membership



Our flexible approach to membership means that members only pay for the programs that best suit their needs. We are continuously evaluating and updating our member programs and services to ensure that we continue to provide value for membership. In 2017, with our corporate partners, we offered our members discounted programs and services.

In addition to these partnerships, we offer member exclusive programs and services, including a free listing on RMTFind.com, a subscription to Massage Therapy Today magazine, a weekly e-newsletter The Friday File, continuing education opportunities, and access to members-only resources and support.

New in 2017 – Research Databases

In January 2017 we launched our new Research Database Program.

In partnership with EBSCO, we have provided our members access to a large quantity of high quality, full-text journals, covering an extensive scope of health sciences subject matter, through our subscription to the Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature (CINAHL) and MEDLINE, the US National Library of Medicine premier bibliographic database.

To ensure our members are able to quickly and effectively access the research they need, we provided two customized webinars outlining how to search the databases including tips and tricks to make searches more targeted and effective.

We are very pleased to continue to offer this research database access to our members, and we have been overwhelmed by the positive feedback we have received as our members continue to incorporate research and evidence into their practices.



“I can’t tell you how valuable I think this [research] access is for members. One of the best things you could have done for us.”

“Thanks very much for arranging for this and making it a priority.”

“So useful to have access to peer reviewed research!”

Member Survey

We surveyed our members to find out what more we could do.



68% are interested in resources that can be immediately applied to clinical practice, including relevant research, forms and templates. We have begun to create resources in the Tools for your Practice

section of our website, including record keeping sample forms and templates, as well as communication and interprofessional collaboration resources. We also offered members-only research access, and feature a Research Article of the Week in our weekly e-newsletter.



52% of our members would like to see further discounts on various types of personal insurance, and we continue to investigate new options for health benefits and disability insurance. Less than half of

our members have access to extended health and dental benefits, and we have been researching affordable premiums for our members.



We value the feedback from our members, and we will continue to work to bring value to the RMTAO membership.

Awards and Recognition

The RMTAO hosted our Awards Gala on June 3, 2017 in Toronto.

Congratulations to our 2017 RMTAO Award recipients.

- 1 RMT of the Year: Susan Bessonette
- 2 Professional Service Award: Stacey Shipwright
- 3 Research Award: Donelda Gowan-Moody
- 4 Educator of the Year: Andrew Clapperton
- 5 Honorary Membership with the RMTAO: Dr. Martha Menard



2017 Conference:

RMTAO
EXCELLENCE IN PRACTICE



On June 3, 2017, the RMTAO hosted almost 200 RMTs from across Canada at the 2017 RMTAO Conference: Excellence in Practice, in Toronto. This conference included engaging keynote speakers, high-quality presenters and a business panel discussion with RMTs that have been extremely successful with their respective business models.



This one-day action packed conference was divided into three crucial streams – research, business and patient populations. Our expanded sponsor tradeshow allowed attendees to check out the latest products and services available for massage therapists.

RMTs were able to share experiences, new ideas, solutions and possibilities.

“I just wanted to say thank you. I have been an RMT for 7 years, and this is the first massage therapy conference I have ever been to. I LOVED it.”

“I really enjoyed it – thought it was well worth the money.”

“Coming out to the RMTAO conferences connects me with my profession.”

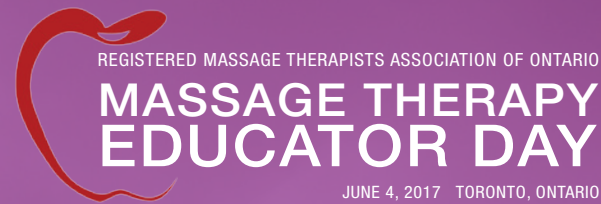
“This was my first RMTAO conference (been practicing eleven years) but because I had such a great experience, I’m already budgeting for next year!”

“I really enjoyed the mix of science, research and business.”



Massage Therapy Educator Day

On June 4, 2017, the RMTAO presented the inaugural Massage Therapy Educator Day!



This first-of-its-kind conference provided a great opportunity for massage therapy educators from across Canada to explore how the changes in the massage therapy profession will impact educators. This unique conference covered important topics such as the impact of accreditation on massage therapy programs and future directions for massage therapy education.

“A much needed in person connection and exchange of information that would not happen otherwise.”

“A tremendous initiative by the RMTAO.”

“This was a very informative conference and the concept of an educator day is very worthwhile.”

“It was very helpful to have discussions with other educators and pick up great ideas to bring back to my classes.”

“Very pleased to see first hand how much we as RMTs and educators care about our profession and each other and the future of massage therapy! A very tightly knit community.”

Professional Development – The Learning Curve

The RMTAO offered 48 courses in 2017

Assessment Courses

The RMTAO offered 32 assessment courses in 2017. These courses were taught by Physiotherapist Aaron Rutter and offered all across Ontario. We continue to update and offer new assessment courses, including a new surface anatomy series. These courses have been well-received by attendees, with an overall satisfaction rating of over 97%, and will continue to be a key component of the RMTAO education program.

Congratulations to all of the RMTAO members who earned the Certificate of Excellence in Assessment this year!

Kaitlyn Benn
David Lamy
Jia Qi Li
Stephanie Webb
Cortney Young

Record Keeping Essentials

The RMTAO offered Record Keeping Essentials five times in 2017 with instructor Amy Beggs.

Gibb Professional Portfolio Preparation for Massage Therapists

The RMTAO offered this professional portfolio preparation course eight times in 2017 with Elizabeth Gibb.

Insurance Reimbursement for Massage Therapists: Working with Auto Insurance and WSIB Cases

The RMTAO offered this online course, in partnership with Centennial College, three times in 2017 with instructors Vivii Riis and Jennifer Hewitt.

Community-Based Networks

Community-Based Networks (CBNs) are local groups of RMTs that are able to meet up and connect, ask questions, share knowledge, and build a strong local community of RMTs. Thank you to our CBN Coordinators for connecting RMTs in your communities and for your continued dedication to the massage therapy profession.

RMTAO Community Based Networks:

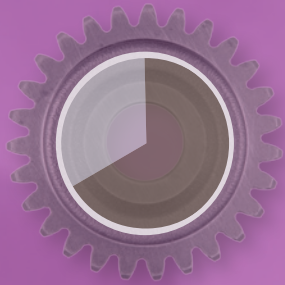
- Aurora/Newmarket
- Barrie
- Bowmanville
- Brantford
- Bruce County
- Cambridge
- Clarkson
- Cornwall
- Durham Region
- Grey County
- Guelph
- Halton-Peel
- Hamilton
- Kingston
- Kitchener-Waterloo
- Leeds-Grenville
- London
- Mississauga
- Near North
- Ottawa
- Ottawa Valley
- Sarnia
- Sault Ste. Marie
- St. Catharines
- Stouffville
- Sudbury
- Thunder Bay
- Toronto Central North
- Toronto East
- Toronto West
- West Niagara: Grimsby, Smithville, Beamsville
- Windsor
- Woodstock

The RMTAO
**We work
for you.**

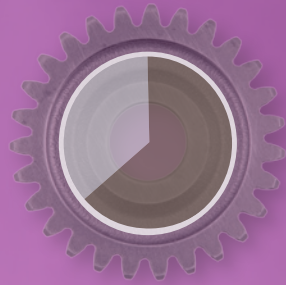
Communication

RMTAO.com

The website RMTAO.com helps our members find the products and resources they're looking for, promotes the massage therapy profession to the general public, and promotes the activities of the RMTAO to all RMTs and to the public.



67%
of visitors to RMTAO.com come from organic searches.



64%
of visitors to RMTAO.com are new visitors.

Top search terms bringing users to RMTAO.com

- What is massage
- Benefits of massage
- Importance of massage
- Registered massage therapist
- Are massage therapists in Ontario primary health providers?

Most popular pages on RMTAO.com

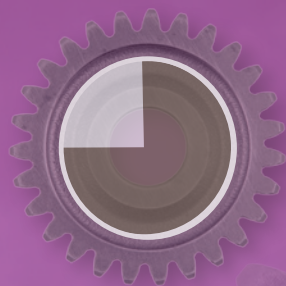
- RMT Positions Available
- Benefits of Massage Therapy
- Becoming an RMT
- Understanding Massage Therapy Services and Fees
- What is Massage Therapy?

RMTFind.com

RMTFind.com is a search tool for the public, listing RMTAO members. Members of the public can search RMTFind.com by therapist name, city or postal code.



86%
of visitors to RMTFind.com come from organic searches.



83%
of visitors to RMTFind.com are new visitors.

The most common search terms that bring users to RMTFind.com:

- RMT
- Massage Therapy Thunder Bay
- RMT Scarborough
- Massage Therapy Mississauga
- RMT Toronto

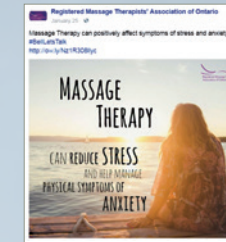
Social Media

FACEBOOK

PAGE LIKES **2880**

TOP POSTS:

Massage Therapy can positively affect symptoms of stress and anxiety. #BellLetsTalk



PEOPLE REACHED **21,594**

REACTIONS, COMMENTS AND SHARES **911**

POST CLICKS **793**

Great news. Trudeau has confirmed that health and dental benefits will NOT be taxed! Thank you to everyone who let their opposition to this proposal be heard.

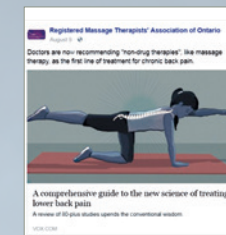


PEOPLE REACHED **20,165**

REACTIONS, COMMENTS AND SHARES **619**

POST CLICKS **1,506**

Doctors are now recommending "non-drug therapies", like massage therapy, as the first line of treatment for chronic low back pain.



PEOPLE REACHED **13,588**

REACTIONS, COMMENTS AND SHARES **381**

POST CLICKS **650**

TWITTER

FOLLOWERS **1616**

AVERAGE TWEET LIKES PER MONTH **179**

AVERAGE RETWEETS PER MONTH **105**

TOP TWEETS:

“Perfect Posture Doesn’t Exist” with RMTAO Education Conference keynote presenter @GregLehman <http://ow.ly/Gcva30aoWCw>
2952 Impressions • **11** Engagements

The use of massage therapy for post-operative care @adaptivetherapy <http://ow.ly/Nx3b30avD5z>
1522 Impressions • **51** Engagements

“Is running on pavement risky?” @PainSci <http://ow.ly/TmaA30djNL1>
1390 Impressions • **25** Engagements

Regular Massage Therapy Eases Pain and Fatigue of MS, Small Study Reports <http://ow.ly/x3bW308SwiD>
1461 Impressions • **33** Engagements

Massage therapy can positively affect physical symptoms of stress and anxiety. #BellLetsTalk,
1816 Impressions • **52** Engagements

Massage Therapy Awareness Week



Massage Therapy Awareness Week was celebrated October 22-28, 2017.

The RMTAO promoted the value of massage therapy through our social media channels. We shared short videos highlighting massage therapy, which were then shared by our social media followers. These videos focused on massage therapists' anatomy knowledge and assessment skills, and what to expect during a massage therapy treatment.

We also created several articles outlining the ways that massage therapy can benefit the average person in their everyday life, including in the benefits of massage therapy for improved sleep, pain-free chores, stress reduction, health issues from sitting, tips for weekend warriors, potentially painful fashion choices and work-related musculoskeletal injuries. These posts included the hashtag **#AskYourRMT**, to highlight the role of RMTs as health care professionals who can be consulted on a wide range of issues.

Thank you to our members for helping us reach more people than ever before to raise awareness during **Massage Therapy Awareness Week**.

The Friday File

the
Friday File

The **Friday File** e-newsletter continues to be a popular source of news, research and information for RMTAO members. The Friday File provides weekly updates about the massage therapy profession and the activities of the association, and shares relevant research and news articles.

The **Friday File** is sent weekly to over **6,400** members and partners.



Massage Therapy Today

The RMTAO released four issues of **Massage Therapy Today: Putting Knowledge into Practice**. The themes for this year were palliative care, business, stress & anxiety and professional issues. 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 and included information outlining the benefits of RMTAO membership.

Advocacy

The RMTAO advocates on behalf of all Registered Massage Therapists in Ontario.

Our advocacy efforts have focused on preparing for the future by strengthening relationships with government, the insurance industry, and other essential stakeholders, and collaborating with other health professional associations in Ontario and across Canada.

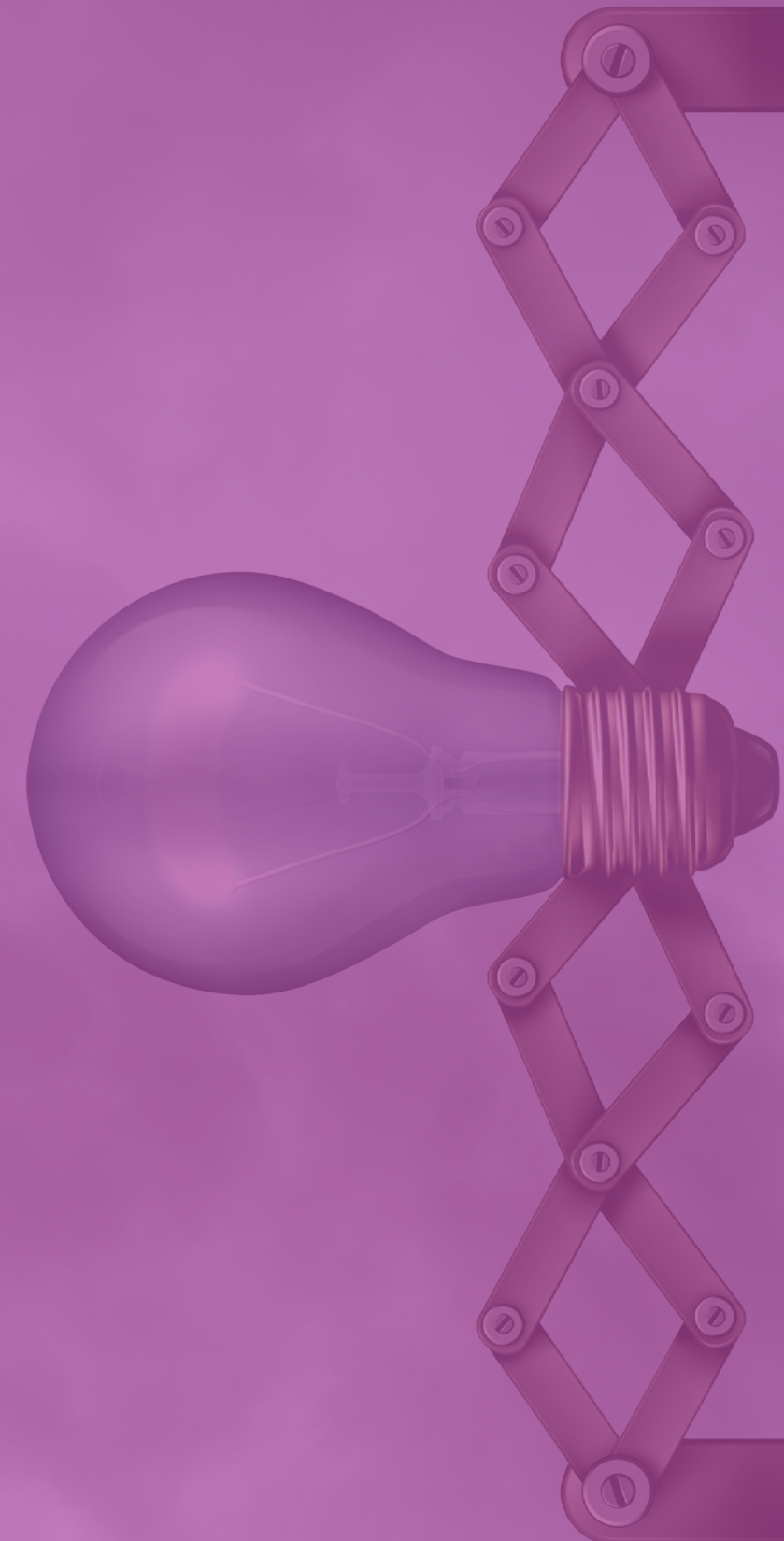
Provincial Advocacy Highlights

- Active participation in the **Coalition Representing Health Professionals in Automobile Insurance Services** relating to the recommended revision of the auto insurance motor vehicle accident rehabilitative process, including consultations with the **Financial Services Commission of Ontario** and the **Ministry of Finance**.
- Engagement with the **College of Massage Therapists of Ontario** relating to the new standards developed in response to Bill 87, *Protecting Patients Act*, resulting in the revision of the standards to reflect our recommendations for the removal of several restrictive requirements.
- Working closely with our partners at the **Coalition of Ontario Regulated Health Professional Associations** on important issues including proposed changes to the *Regulated Health Professions Act*, Bill 87, clinic regulation and digital health records.
- Continued participation in the development of a program of care for mild traumatic brain injury with the **Workplace Safety and Insurance Board**.
- Continued consultation with the **Centre for Effective Practice** regarding the research results, provided by Centennial College and partially funded by the RMTAO, regarding the Primary Care Low Back Pain Pilot Project.

Legislation

National Advocacy Highlights

- Engaged a government relations firm for the development and implementation of a government relations strategic plan with the objective to have the federal government exempt HST for services provided by Massage Therapists.
- Obtained letters of support for the regulation of massage therapy in unregulated jurisdictions from the **Canadian Life and Health Insurance Association**.
- Represented the **Canadian Massage Therapist Alliance** at the Canadian Life and Health Insurance Association 2017 Claims and Anti-Fraud Annual Conference.
- Became an active member of the **Organizations for Health Action (HEAL)**, the largest health professions lobbying organization in Canada, working to enhance and continuously improve Canada's health care system.
- Consultation and collaboration with the **Canadian Massage Therapy Council for Accreditation**.
- Engaged specific insurance companies regarding the increasing trend of the removal of providers by insurers.
- Provided feedback to a national insurance company outlining concerns relating to the inclusion of patient satisfaction surveys of health providers upon submission of an extended health care claim.
- Provision of a letter to the **Minister of Advanced Education in Saskatchewan** relating to the level of education required of massage therapists in order to be granted regulation, resulting in the renewed discussion of regulation in the province of Saskatchewan.



BE CONNECTED



Visit our website at **RMTAO.com**



Find us on Facebook at
www.facebook.com/RMTAO



Find us on Twitter
@RMTAO

CONTACT US



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Registered Massage Therapists'
Association of Ontario