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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

**MASSAGE THERAPIST POPULATION TOPS 278,000;
JUMPS MORE THAN 15 PERCENT SINCE 2006**

(Evergreen, Colo., March 6) — The number of massage therapists in the United States has grown by more than 37,000 in the past two years, according to new research by Associated Bodywork & Massage Professionals (ABMP). The biennial research has been conducted by ABMP since 1998.

According to ABMP, the number of U.S. massage therapists as of January 2008 was 278,089. This represents an increase of 15.6 percent from the last estimate of 240,583, conducted in January 2006.

The estimate was based on state licensing lists, totals from primary membership organizations (ABMP and the American Massage Therapy Association) and state populations. General receptivity to massage in particular regions was also considered in the estimation process.

“Massage continues to be recognized by consumers as a popular, cost-effective path to personal wellness,” says Les Sweeney, nationally certified massage therapist and ABMP president. “It’s not surprising massage has continued to grow as a career path as well. With growth in U.S. population overall and an increased number of massage therapy schools, it stands to reason the number of practitioners would increase as well.”

California continues to lead the pack in the number of therapists, with an estimated 37,544. California's total is an estimate because without statewide regulation there, no state licensing rolls exist. The state with the fewest massage therapists is Wyoming, with just 552.

The per capita, or number of U.S. citizens per massage therapist, has continued to decrease as a result of the growth in massage therapists. This means there are more massage therapists to serve the population.

"The growth has been remarkable," Sweeney says. "In 1998, there was an estimated one massage therapist for every 1,941 people in the United States. The current estimate is one massage therapist for every 1,085 people."

While the growth of the field has been impressive over the decade, Sweeney cautions against the conclusion that growth is a detriment for active practitioners. "More qualified practitioners who can provide services to the public are a good thing," he says. "After all, when you contrast the 278,000-plus massage therapists with the more than 3 million registered and licensed practical nurses, an estimated 480,000 medical doctors, and the more than 350,000 cosmetologists in the United States, you can see there's still plenty of room for those considering massage therapy careers."

ABMP is the nation's largest massage membership association with 62,000 members. Headquartered in Evergreen, Colo., ABMP is celebrating its 20th year serving the massage therapy profession.

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