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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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**ABMP-COMMISSIONED PROFESSION  
SURVEY FINDS MASSAGE THERAPISTS  
UPBEAT IN TROUBLED ECONOMY**

(Evergreen, Colo., July 2) – Despite an uneasy economy, 42 percent of massage therapists said in April they expect their practice revenues to grow during the next 12 months, according to a survey conducted by Readex Research and released today by Associated Bodywork & Massage Professionals (ABMP). Just 5 percent of massage therapists expected a decline in their massage income. The survey was conducted nationally from a representative cross-section taken from state licensing rolls.<sup>i</sup>

**Career and Education**

Similar to information learned from ABMP member surveys in recent years, respondents from this broad profession cross-section average 14 client contact hours weekly and 71 percent reported they would like more clients. Ninety-two percent of massage therapists said most of their new business comes from word of mouth referrals. Those actively practicing said their 2007 massage and bodywork income averaged \$20,300 and for 40 percent of them, that figure represented their sole income. Those in their initial year or two of practice earn substantially less.

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“Past surveys have indicated massage therapists pursue their careers with a sense of mission or calling,” said Les Sweeney, nationally certified massage therapist and ABMP president. “More than four in five report they are actively engaged in their work and intend to continue practicing. Just 6 percent disagree.”<sup>ii</sup>

Survey respondents average 8.1 years tenure, which other data suggests is above average for the profession as a whole. Even though representative respondents to this survey display solid connection to massage practice, attrition has long been a concern of profession leaders. Anecdotal evidence indicates three primary reasons massage therapists leave the field – the difficulty of building and sustaining a practice, the physical strain of providing massage and life events like moving or other changes in family situations.

The average age for survey respondents is 43 years and 85 percent of practitioners are women. Three-quarters have some college education and 41 percent have completed college. Continuing education continues to be important to massage therapists; 86 percent of respondents indicated they desire further education.

### **Publication Preferences**

The survey found massage therapists rely heavily on periodicals to keep up with their profession. Predictably, 88 percent of ABMP members named the association’s flagship publication *Massage & Bodywork* as one they read. By contrast, 69 percent of American Massage Therapy Association (AMTA) members indicated they read AMTA’s lead publication, *Massage Therapy Journal*. Massage therapists belonging to neither of the two professional associations were asked to choose a preferred massage publication; 28 percent chose *Massage & Bodywork*, 24 percent chose *Massage Magazine*, 20 percent said *Massage Therapy Journal* and 10 percent cited *Massage Today*.

“*Massage & Bodywork* collected gold and silver EXCEL awards just this month from the Society of National Association Publications (SNAP), plus an honorable mention in another competition judged by the Missouri School of Journalism,” Sweeney said. “This recognition and these survey results indicate our deliberate and thoughtful response to readership needs and interests has been well received.”

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*Massage & Bodywork* magazine took gold and silver in the SNAP categories of most improved 50,000-plus circulation magazine and best redesign, reflecting a comprehensive new format and look launched in January 2008.

*Massage & Bodywork* received the honorable mention for the best all-around association publication in the 2008 Magnum Opus awards competition sponsored by *Publications Management*, a newsletter of McMurray Publishing, Inc.

Associated Bodywork & Massage Professionals is the nation's largest massage membership association with 64,000 members. Founded in 1987 and headquartered in Evergreen, Colo., ABMP is celebrating its 21<sup>st</sup> year of service to the massage therapy profession.

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i Sponsored by ABMP and conducted by independent research firm Readex Research. Readex Research approached 4,000 individuals randomly selected from ABMP membership lists and from 108,000 non-ABMP members gleaned from state licensing lists; 1,086 practitioners responded, of which 382 are ABMP members, 261 are AMTA members and 443 belong to neither of these associations. ABMP's sponsorship was not identified to individuals asked to participate in the survey. Data was collected by mail between March 31 and April 28.

ii 12 percent were neutral or did not answer.