



WORKING TOWARD A COMMON GOAL

ABMP Applauds AMTA Recognition of MBLEx

(Golden, Colo., Jan. 27, 2009) -- Associated Bodywork & Massage Professionals (ABMP) today said it commends the American Massage Therapy Association (AMTA) for reaching the conclusion, after careful and thorough study, that “the MBLEx exam, developed by the Federation of State Massage Therapy Boards (FSMTB) is the best choice for a licensing exam that can lead to portability of massage practice.”⁽¹⁾

“We applaud the decision of the AMTA Board of Directors,” said ABMP President Les Sweeney, NCTM. “This is an important step forward for the profession.”

AMTA provided leadership and loaned funds in the early 1990s to create an organization, the National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage & Bodywork (NCBTMB), to offer a way for individual massage practitioners to qualify for national certification and thus demonstrate their commitment to high professional standards. The AMTA statement makes clear it still sees voluntary certification as “a valuable cornerstone of the massage therapy profession.” Nonetheless, ABMP wishes to recognize AMTA’s courage and selflessness in assessing changes in the profession and endorsing the separation of roles for NCBTMB and FSMTB exams.

ABMP played an instrumental role in creating the FSMTB and has felt for some time that an exam like the MBLEx that is specifically oriented to assess qualifications for initial licensure is the appropriate instrument for that purpose. A key factor in that decision is that FSMTB’s constituent members are state licensing boards; the MBLEx exam was developed and is administered by the state bodies charged with deciding who is qualified to begin massage practice.

ABMP has also consistently supported the continued availability of voluntary national certification. Entry level readiness assessment and demonstration of an advanced level of commitment should be two complementary pillars of the massage therapy profession -- as is already the case in many other health care professions. “We feel there is a place in the massage and bodywork profession for advanced credentialing,” Sweeney said.

ABMP shares AMTA’s stated aim to promote portability within the profession as well as its expression of hope that its “support for one massage licensing exam will help move the profession forward in a unified way.” ABMP currently is engaged alongside AMTA, NCBTMB, FSMTB and other massage organizations in working toward agreement upon articulation of a commonly accepted massage therapy body of knowledge.

For 22 years, ABMP and AMTA have healthily competed to secure and retain members of their respective professional membership organizations. The individual therapist has benefited from the resulting efforts by both organizations to add services and improve value. For the good of the profession, it is important that the two organizations can complement that competition by working in agreement on important issues like the entry-level exam choice matter at hand.

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(1) The Massage and Bodywork Licensing Examination (MBLEx) test was developed with input from more than 7,600 massage and bodywork practitioners, state regulatory agencies and 50 subject-matter experts in massage and bodywork education and practice. It was introduced in October 2007 and has been accepted by 15 state regulatory boards.