



Associated Bodywork & Massage Professionals

25188 Genesee Trail Rd, Ste 200  
Golden, CO 80401  
800-458-2267  
fax 800-667-8260  
www.abmp.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Apr. 21, 2011

Contact:  
Carrie Patrick  
800-458-2267, ext. 647  
carrie@abmp.com

### **SURVEY SHOWS RECESSION'S IMPACT ON MASSAGE SCHOOLS**

(Golden, Colo., Apr. 21) – The number of massage therapy training programs offered in the United States has declined for the first time since 2009, according to a new report from Associated Bodywork & Massage Professionals (ABMP). The report shows that there are currently 1,440 institutions that offer massage training, down from 1,600 in 2009. This is the first reported decline in the 12 years ABMP has conducted the survey. The association has conducted a census every two years since 1999.

ABMP's 2011 Massage Therapy Program Enrollment Census attempted to reach every massage therapy program in the United States over a four-week period, gaining participation from 75% of programs. This year's results show a 10% decrease in the number of training programs since 2009, and an 11% decrease in the number of graduates from 2008 to 2010. The number of students enrolled in massage schools also showed a decline, from 59,663 in 2009 to 50,008 this year—a decrease of 16.2%.

Much of the loss took place in proprietary schools—institutions that are typically single-campus, single-owner, and often not accredited. Only 23.6% of massage training programs offered by these schools were accredited and eligible for federal funding.

“In a recession, it is more challenging for any school to find students who can afford tuition,” said Les Sweeney, nationally certified massage therapist and ABMP president. “Accreditation and student access to federal financial aid can make a significant difference to a school's enrollment and graduation rates.”

Among proprietary schools, accredited programs on average graduate more than twice as many students as their non-accredited colleagues.

Enrollment in massage therapy training programs peaked in 2004/2005, and has been leveling off since then. ABMP predicted in 2009 that numbers would decline, due to a combination of economic trends and a natural adjustment to demand following the previous boom years for the field.

ABMP serves massage therapy and bodywork professionals and is devoted to promoting ethical practices, fostering acceptance of the professions, and protecting the rights of practitioners. Representing more than 77,000 members, ABMP is headquartered in Golden, Colorado, is employee owned, and is the largest massage therapy membership association in the nation.

###