



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Texas Adopts NCBTMB's Nationally Recognized Massage Therapy Exams 32 states and District of Columbia now recognize national testing standards

OAKBROOK TERRACE, Illinois (October 10, 2007) – The state of Texas has become the 32nd state to officially adopt the nationally recognized guidelines and examination requirements of the National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage & Bodywork (NCBTMB). Responding to increasing numbers of massage schools and practitioners, as well as a growing demand for increased instructional hours commensurate with other states, the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) has expanded its educational requirements for licensure in the field of massage therapy. Under the ruling, current massage students concluding their training after September 1, 2008, and new students enrolling in training programs as of September 1, 2007, will be required to complete 500 hours of training. The requirement supercedes the previous 300-hour minimum.

The intent of House Bill 2644 is to bring Texas in line with national minimum standards for therapeutic massage, and thus to promote a higher standard of practice for massage licensees in their chosen profession. With the June 2007 passage of the bill, the current Texas state massage examination is slated to be phased out according to an August 31 DSHS letter to stakeholders. It will be replaced by three exams, two being the NCETM (National Certification Examination for Therapeutic Massage) and the NCETMB (National Certification Examination for Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork). Both exams satisfy all of the newly established educational requirements for licensure in Texas. Moreover, with the adoption of the national tests, students can add the widely accepted and highly credible national credential to their state license by sitting for only one exam.

NCBTMB is already working with state officials and members of the massage community to facilitate the change during the period of stakeholder input. In Austin, NCBTMB CEO Chris Laxton recently participated in discussions with members of TAMSO (Texas Association of Massage School Owners), massage therapists, instructors and the DSHS to answer questions about the national exam and offer input as the national credentialing body. Laxton was pleased with the outcome of the initial meeting. "The state officials are bringing the right people together to make this a positive and smooth transition," he said. "This kind of input directly from key stakeholders is essential, and we are grateful to the state for inviting us."

Donna Feeley, Chair of NCBTMB, was optimistic about the Texas ruling and commented on the growing national movement toward massage and bodywork as a

viable treatment option in the U.S. “As more and more people turn to massage therapy in this country, it is more important than ever that therapists hold and display the national credential,” she said. “Consumers, practitioners and everyone connected with the massage field will benefit from a higher degree of professionalism, ethics and safety.”

NCBTMB Chair of the Volunteer Retention Subcommittee, Deborah Korpi, was also present at the meeting. “This is a win-win for our entire state,” she said. “As a nationally certified, licensed practitioner in Texas, I know the higher standards set by the department will ensure that therapists remain at the leading edge in the field,” she said.

For the past 15 years, NCBTMB has administered its national credentialing program, consisting of regular, scientifically rigorous job task analyses, standards of practice, a code of ethics and a recertification component espousing professional development through continuing education and hands-on practice. Today, 87,000 practitioners hold NCBTMB certification throughout the U.S. and in the West Indies, Virgin Islands, Guam, Puerto Rico and Canada. The organization continues to build and strengthen a number of strategic objectives involving their school outreach programs, recertification processes and customer service initiatives.

ABOUT NCBTMB

The National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage & Bodywork (NCBTMB) was established in 1992 as an independent, private, nonprofit organization fostering the highest standards of ethical and professional practice in the delivery of therapeutic massage and bodywork through a recognized credentialing program. NCBTMB examinations are currently utilized or recognized in statute or rule by 32 states plus the District of Columbia. There are currently 87,000 professionals with NCBTMB certification. NCBTMB has been accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA) since 1993.

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