

Opinion **Community Voices**

## Why Minnesota needs massage therapy regulation

Massage therapy is currently regulated at the municipal level through local ordinances, or in some cases not at all. Establishing a centralized regulatory mechanism can increase consumer protection and reinforce trust in the profession.

By Deb Bushway and Rachel Romanelli



*Photo by Anna Tarazevich*

**3 mins ago** As a state widely recognized for its progressive focus on health care, Minnesota stands proud in many aspects of medical innovation and patient care. However, in a surprising oversight, Minnesota is among

the final four states without formal regulatory measures for massage therapy.

The gap in regulation not only leaves an important portion of our health sector unregulated but also compromises the safety and quality of care available to Minnesotans. This bill is on the docket for Minnesota's 2024 legislative session. The time to act is now.

Why is the regulation of massage therapy so crucial? The current lack of oversight means that Minnesotans have limited access to safe, consistent and essential health care, less protection against potential abuse and less access to evidence-based non-pharmacological pain management with massage therapy.

## **Quality and consistency of care for Minnesotans**

When standardized practices and measurable standards are lacking, there is a considerable difference in the quality of care offered by various massage therapists. The lack of consistency can lead to uncertainty for patients, who may find it challenging to anticipate the level of service and care they will receive across providers.

The American Massage Therapy Association (AMTA) emphasizes the importance of legal recognition for massage therapy through licensure as it serves as a safeguard for the public by establishing a consistent standard of practice. The measures are designed to not only elevate the overall quality of care but also provide patients with confidence and clarity regarding the standards upheld by massage therapists.

More centralized regulation could also help improve affordable, equitable access to this critical care. Without consistent quality standards and regulations, third-party insurance companies have not always included massage therapy in their coverage, making it inaccessible to many Minnesotans. Formal recognition in the health care system and verifiable quality standards could help secure financial support through insurance coverage, ultimately expanding equitable access to alternative and holistic care options for all Minnesotans.

Regulation is critical in building trust and protection among patients. Proper licensure creates legal boundaries and protection against potential abuse and human trafficking and ensures practitioners adhere to ethical and professional standards. Massage therapy is currently regulated at the municipal level through local ordinances, or in some cases not at all. Establishing a centralized regulatory mechanism can increase consumer protection and reinforce trust in the profession.

## **Non-pharmacological pain management strategy**



Rachel Romanelli

Minnesota continues to be impacted by the national crisis of opioid misuse and licensed massage therapy often serves as a component of a non-pharmacological pain management strategy. Recent guidelines emphasizing non-drug approaches to pain management highlight the potential for massage therapy to contribute significantly to combating opioid misuse, providing another strong reason for the urgent need for regulation.



Deb Bushway

To the citizens of Minnesota, your voices matter in shaping the healthcare landscape of our state. Let your legislators know you stand behind the regulation of massage therapy through [this link](#). Legislators, we are counting on you to support this industry that supports the lives of Minnesotans each year.

Minnesota has long been the leader of progressive health care initiatives. It's time to prioritize the well-being and safety of our citizens and community by implementing much-needed regulations for massage therapy.

*Deb Bushway is president and CEO of Northwestern Health Sciences University. Rachel Romanelli is chapter president and governmental relations chair of AMTA MN.*

**Thanks to our major sponsors**



is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit  
newsroom

MinnPost | P.O. Box 18438 | Minneapolis, MN 55418 | [612.455.6950](tel:612.455.6950)

 Powered by WordPress VIP