

**MINUTES OF THE MASSAGE THERAPY
ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Thursday, October 18, 2007
Room 336, Rhodes Office Tower 3rd Floor
30 East Broad Street, Columbus OH 43215**

Call to Order: Ms. Rieve called the meeting to order at 1:10 p.m. on Thursday, October 18, 2007.

Committee Members Present: Rick Greely, Jeanne-Marie Hall

Guests Present: Ramona Chance, AMTA Ohio Chapter; Niki Hettel, EHOVE; and Katie Fox, EHOVE

Medical Board Staff Present: Kay Rieve, Sallie Debolt, Mike Miller, and Judy Rodriguez

Old Business

It was decided to review the August minutes via email.

New Business

Ms. Rieve informed the committee that the dates for MTAC meetings in 2008 are scheduled from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. as follows:

Thursday, January 17
Thursday, April 17
Thursday, July 17
Thursday, October 16

Report from the Federation of Massage Therapy Boards Convention - Sallie Debolt

Ms. Debolt reported that the agenda was full of information about the examination and that it was an intense meeting. She said that there are 24 paid members of the federation and 19 delegates attended. There were also non-members from various massage therapy schools, boards, and organizations. Ms. Debolt stated that the federation has worked hard at putting together a defensible, psychometrically sound examination in 15 months. As a result of that, they are really 'in the hole' financially. She mentioned that the federation is very dedicated not only regarding the examination but the other services it provides.

Ms. Debolt stated that there were by-law changes regarding the way officers are elected. They proposed that officers be elected no longer by the delegates but by the board. She explained that the proposed process would be that the delegates would elect the board and the board would

choose officers from among themselves. Ms. Debolt stated that she objected resulting in Ohio being the sole dissenting vote. She explained that she felt it was wrong for delegates to give up their right to choose their officers.

Ms. Rieve asked Ms. Debolt if she was the only attorney there. Ms. Debolt answered that she was the only attorney delegate. She then offered that the delegates represented a good mix of people passionate about wanting the federation to succeed.

Ms. Debolt stated that the examination went live for the first time on Monday, October 15. She mentioned that there is a company who is providing the “backroom staff” to process exam applications for the federation. She also said that there are no eligibility requirements to take the exam. For example, a nurse with certain training may be able to pass the exam without going to through MT training. Ramona offered that the federation is leaving it to the states to do the licensing. Ms. Rieve said that we would still have our education requirements for licensure.

Ms. Debolt stated that there was a lot of information given regarding the process used to make the test psychometrically sound. In addition there was a lot of discussion about writing the test items.

Ms. Debolt also mentioned that there was information sharing among the boards. She shared that in South Carolina the legislature created the board but it was given no funding. They have contracted with a private attorney who provides advice, office space, equipment, and staff. The law office does all the administrative work of the MT board. The attorney’s office fronted the money for two years and now receives 65% of revenue. In other states, the MT board is part of the department of health. Ms. Debolt mentioned that while there is diversity among the states regarding how the MT board is set up, the practice of massage therapy is uniformly the same. She explained that the task analysis found that no matter where you are in the country, no matter what names you use, massage therapy is massage therapy.

Mr. Greely asked if they talked about the survey they used for the task analysis. They had representation from all states and some of the US territories but his understanding was that Ohio had the largest response. Ms. Debolt said that wasn’t mentioned in the presentation but it might be in the report. Ms. Chance stated that she had the report and California was the highest, but Ohio was close behind.

Ms. Debolt said that another thing they learned from these surveys is that massage therapists in general are happy in their work. She also mentioned that the academic community was astounded at the outcome because it showed such a uniformity and satisfaction. Mr. Greely offered that they at first thought the numbers were wrong. He also said that the survey showed that it didn’t matter where the MTs were practicing.

Ms. Debolt said there was some discussion about the difference between licensure and certification. In addition there was discussion about what else the federation could do to help the state boards. Ms. Debolt informed the federation that the State Medical Board Of Ohio is part of the Federation of State Medical Boards and that Ohio would like the FSMTB to use the FSMB as a model. Other things Ms. Debolt mentioned were a databank of credentials and discipline; a

database of rules and statutes; and a way to communicate with each other. She also mentioned to the federation that Ohio would like to “get out of the exam business” but aren’t ready to do so just yet until we have assurances that the science portion meets our standard.

Ms. Chance mentioned that there were six states who have accepted the exam. Ms. Debolt then added that there was some discussion about the test being provided in foreign languages and the challenges that would present. Ms. Debolt then offered that the test is 2-1/2 hours long, costs \$195, and has 125 multiple choice questions. She added that there would be at least one test site in each state. Ms. Chance added that there are several in Ohio—Toledo, Cleveland, Columbus, Dayton, and Cincinnati. Ms. Debolt said there is a list of sites at www.pearsonvue.com/fsmtb. Ms. Debolt also stated that there is a way to add an Ohio addendum to the test.

Council of Schools (CoS) – Rick Greely

Mr. Greely stated that the majority of the discussion at the CoS meeting was the Federation test. Some of the Board’s concerns were shared by the CoS (e.g. meeting Ohio standards, fairness, etc). The concern was that the council would have to come up with a new curriculum guide when they had just finished one. He mentioned that once the council looked at the Federation’s content breakdown, they knew that their curriculum would be more than sufficient to pass the Federation test with minor “tweaks”. The council did approve funding 20 Ohio students to take the Federation test. This group of students would be a mix from star performers to marginal students. This would give a fair assessment by comparing how these students perform on the Ohio vs. the Federation tests. The details of this idea have yet to be worked out.

Ms. Debolt mentioned this idea to the Federation suggesting that it be without charge. She felt that the Federation wouldn’t agree to doing it free but would allow Ohio students take it with the idea that it’s not for Ohio licensure. Mr. Greely said that the students would be made aware that the Federation test is not for licensure. He would make them aware that if they fail the Ohio test they can’t be licensed regardless of how they did on the Federation test. It was mentioned that they could go to another state for licensure. It was agreed that they could do that if the state accepts the Federation test for licensure.

Ms. Hall asked Ms. Debolt how the Federation dealt with the Ohio exam regarding Kellogg and acupuncture issues. Ms. Debolt said that Ohio is concerned about the level of science on the Federation test. There was some discussion regarding the content breakdown of the test. Mr. Greely asked that if we do an Ohio addendum, would that have to be a juris prudence. Ms. Debolt said it could be depending on what you want the exam to cover. Ms. Rieve mentioned that Florida added a juris prudence exam to the test. She said that they put it in to the Federation test in such a way that it’s transparent to the test-taker. Ms. Chance mentioned that New York is doing the same thing regarding the Asian section.

Ms. Hall asked about the passing rate. However it was mentioned that there is no data yet as the test has only been given for the first time last week. There was discussion regarding what a passing grade is and what we would accept. Ms. Rieve mentioned that it’s in statute that we accept whatever the MD test requires as passing. We could do the same thing on this test. She

mentioned that we would have to do some analysis on how our test and the Federation test match up. Then a determination could be made if an addendum is needed.

Mr. Miller asked what we would do if a person took the Federation test, is licensed in Florida, and comes to Ohio seeking licensure. Mr. Greely said that we could still do the addendum as part of our licensure requirement. There was discussion surrounding making this addendum computer-based and perhaps offered by the Federation so we could be out of the “testing business.” Mr. Miller then asked how these MTs would learn what is on the Ohio addendum. Mr. Greely said that the schools could offer a course on just Ohio-required information. Ms. Rieve said that the Federation is putting together a study guide. Ms. Chance mentioned that we could do it by requiring continuing education. Mr. Greely mentioned that we would have to change the statute anyway, so we could do it at that time.

Ms. Rieve mentioned that we need to come up with a way to pick the students to take the exam. She mentioned that students who want to move out of state would have an incentive to take the exam. It would be a win-win situation in that they would get the test for free and we would get our data. Mr. Greely said that we want to get a good cross-section of students. He said that there are star performers that don't test well, and marginal students who shine on tests. So we need to be sure we get a good mix.

Ms. Hall asked how the CoS feels about the amount of Kellogg being taught in the schools vs. only 17% being incorporated into the Federation test. Mr. Greely said that the biggest concern wasn't the amount of Kellogg, it is the commonality of language. Ms. Hall added that a student who studies Kellogg for three months will be expecting to see that language on the exam. Mr. Greely offered that at his school, they talk about both. He said that they tell the students what Beck calls effleurage, we call friction. He wasn't sure other schools were doing that. He said that he didn't hear much concern about that. Ms. Rieve added that the council looked at the Federation's content guide and the curriculum and noticed that they weren't very different. Mr. Greely said that in coming up with the curriculum guide, they had to have a reference text. This was because in the past, the tests were text-specific. He expressed his hope that the Federation was able to root out these kinds of questions. Mr. Greely also stated that Ohio may need to tweak it's curriculum guide a little.

There was some discussion regarding Ohio MTs moving to other states vs. MTs who move from other states to Ohio. It was agreed that, in theory, if the Federation test is used with a state addendum, the MT who already took the Federation test would just have to take the addendum. Ms. Rieve mentioned that the Board could perhaps come up with a study guide or give MTs the Ohio statute to study regarding scope of practice. She stated that if Ohio used an addendum, we would give students ample information or inform them of where to get it. It was agreed that they wouldn't have to go to school again.

Ms. Debolt mentioned that even if Ohio accepts the Federation test, it doesn't make Ohio licensure easy for those who come from out of state. Mr. Greely agreed but said it makes it at least accessible depending on statute. Ms. Rieve mentioned that the criteria, the statutes, and rules all need to be looked at during this process.

To summarize, Ms. Debolt said that Federation test looks good, and Ohio wants it to be good, but the decision has not been made. Ms. Hall asked about the timeframe for this decision process. Ms. Rieve offered that it might take at least 3 more exam cycles to get some data. There was some discussion about the process involved in getting an Ohio addendum put together. There was consensus that we didn't just want to drop the Ohio exam. The Federation test needs to be phased in.

Ms. Fox asked about what we may do regarding the fees for the tests if we offer both. She mentioned that the Federation test is \$195 and the Ohio is \$250. Ms. Rieve mentioned that you get a license with the Ohio exam. Ms. Rieve stated that there would have to be a licensing fee written in statute for those taking the Federation test. There was continued discussion regarding licensing fees and renewal fees in general.

Ms. Rieve said that she presented to the CoS the proposed statute change regarding out-of-state MTs applying for licensure. She said it was well-received and that the schools were not upset about someone coming in with 600 hours instead of our 750 hours being accepted. It is being reviewed in-house. The proposed rule change regarding exam deadlines was not well-received because if a student misses the exam they have to wait six months for the next one. Ms. Rieve stated that perhaps we should table the idea now given the fact that we are considering the Federation test. Deadlines are not an issue in that scenario.

Ms. Hall asked if the Federation talked about continuing education requirements. Ms. Debolt answered that they did not because most other states do require continuing education. It's a state issue.

Ms. Debolt asked Mr. Greely if there was anything else from the Council of Schools meeting. Mr. Greely mentioned that they elected officers. He mentioned that the seminar held the previous month was a success. Mr. Whitehouse and Ms. Thompson gave the council information regarding board issues. Ms. Hall asked about publicizing events like this. There was discussion about putting a link on the Board website to accommodate information sharing and event notification.

Correspondence – Sallie Debolt

Ms. Debolt did not have any correspondence to share with the group. She did, however, share with the committee some of the questions the Board receives. Her examples were, "What can a MT students do outside of the program?" or "Can I have an MT student work in my office and they receive credit?" There was agreement that you would have to talk with the school. Mr. Greely offered that there is a provision in the curriculum that 10% of the hours can be done as an externship. Ms. Debolt gave another example: "Can I do relaxation massage and not damage my chances of getting an MT license?" She offered that she answers yes but that the MT can't apply anything they've learned in school. They have to be very careful.

Ms. Debolt also mentioned she gets a lot of questions about MTs working in a chiropractic office. The chiropractor wants to use them as an assistant to do ultrasound and electro-

stimulation and other things they are specifically prohibited from doing. Mr. Greely offered that they also want MTs to do rehab exercises. Ms. Debolt said that the answer is that MTs need to take off their MT nametag and make sure they're not using their MT knowledge.

Mr. Greely said that he talks about this a lot with his students. He tells them they can do relaxation massage but it only takes one complaint to put the license in jeopardy. Ms. Debolt said she cautions MTs that it's easy to blur the lines. Ms. Debolt offered that perhaps the reason these chiropractic issues are increasing is because the Chiropractic Board has adopted rules for the first time that specify what unlicensed persons can do.

Ms. Hall mentioned that there is also still the issue of the hiring relationship, e.g. an independent contractor vs. an employee. And there is still an issue of where an MT license can take you in the professional world. She said it seems that the Chiropractic Board has a pretty powerful hold on MTs out there trying to seek work especially in the area of salary. She mentioned that if chiropractors hire an MT as an employee they control the salary. Ms. Chance offered that MTs need to negotiate their salaries as licensed professionals. Mr. Greely offered that he tells his students that if they are being paid \$18 an hour, that is as good as charging \$60 an hour on their own. He said that by the time you pay taxes and fees it's about the same. Ms. Hall said that another problem is that some MTs only get paid that \$18 dollars/hour if they have a client. Mr. Greely stated that that is an employment contract issue they choose. It was agreed that there is probably still a lack of business education for MTs.

The group was reminded that the next MT exam is scheduled for December 4, 2007 and that the 2008 dates will be set soon.

It was mentioned that Mr. Malecki's name needs to be taken off the committee list on the website and that a new member needed to be found.

Mr. Greely motioned to adjourn and Ms. Hall seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 2:40 p.m.