

**MINUTES OF THE MASSAGE THERAPY
ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Thursday, August 23, 2007
Room B-1, Basement of Rhodes Office Tower**

Call to Order: Ms. Rieve called the meeting to order at 1:06 p.m. on Thursday, August 23, 2007.

Committee Members Present: Dennis Gibbons and Rick Greely.

Guests Present: Ramona Chance, AMTA Ohio Chapter; Niki Hettel, EHOVE; Katie Fox, EHOVE; Debra Persinger, FSMTB; Lowell M. Windam IV, Barbara Stravis, Laura Issenmann.

Staff Present: Kay Rieve, Sallie Debolt, Mike Miller, Richard Whitehouse, Diann Thompson, and Judy Rodriguez

Ms. Rieve asked everyone to introduce themselves as there were several guests present. She also informed the committee that Ms. Hall is not present because of having a new baby and Mr. Phillips is not present due to a prior engagement.

New Business

Report from the Federation of State Massage Therapy Boards by Debra Persinger, Executive Director

Ms. Persinger congratulated the Medical Board for being the latest member of FSMTB. She mentioned that the hot topic at the FSMTB is the exam. It is being developed to meet the needs of reciprocity and nationwide licensing. She mentioned that often, when MTs have to move to another state and take that state's exam, it's 10-15 years since schooling. It is difficult to go back to entry-level thought again.

Ms. Persinger mentioned that, in credentialing, putting together an exam like this can take up to 5 years. But this exam has been in the works one year. Last week, they had the standards setting meeting. In July and August they cut the pilot test and they are on schedule to launch the test in October. Ms. Persinger said that the FSMTB contracted with Meaningful Measurement, a psychometric company out of Chicago who sub-contracted with Pearson View which is a top company in examinations. She said that the regulatory community was overwhelmed with the response to the job analysis. They had over 7,500 people respond. Every state and territory in the country (except for American Samoa) was represented. Ohio had the second highest number of respondents in Ohio. The licensing boards wanted to see what MT's were actually doing. The test was developed based on what people are actually doing not what they think they should be doing.

The exam is a 125-item, multiple-choice test with honored best practices and exceeded best practices every step of the way. They have over 1,000 items in the item bank. They have an excellent group of people who are submitting items every month. Ms. Persinger mentioned that

they are looking at 1-2 years before they go into computer-adaptive testing. Computer testing reduces item exposure and provides security. The Federation has contracted with Pearson View to use their high-security test sites. They have 211 test sites around the country which use biometrics (finger prints, pictures) to assist with security. They have proctors and cameras to aid with security.

Ms. Persinger said in terms of eligibility, there are three options which the states can choose from:

1. Some states don't want to see any applicants until after they've passed the exam. In this option, candidates would come to FSMTB directly for testing, then go to their state board for licensing.
2. Some states want to be in the process from the beginning. So in this option, candidates would go to the licensing board who would then approve candidates to take the exam.
3. Some states are understaffed. So the FSMTB has contracted with a company who will "pose" as a state licensing board and will handle the requirements for the board.

Ms. Persinger stated that the FSMTB wants to work closely with Ohio to determine what is needed. She then offered to entertain questions.

Ms. Thompson offered that the Ohio board is excited about the exam. However the concern is that the national exams offered in the past don't test to the massage therapy level. They may test to the body work level but Ohio licensees are practicing a limited branch of medicine. Ms. Thompson asked Ms. Persinger about where the FSMTB's exam fell in this continuum.

Ms. Persinger offered that the job analysis revealed that there was no significant difference between what body-workers think is important and the frequency with which they perform certain tasks and the same for massage therapists. She asked Rick Greely to assist in answering this question.

Mr. Greely said that he had spent 3 days looking at test questions with people from other states. They had to rank the questions according to their opinion of whether a student would know the answer. He said this was a prestigious group. There was consensus that the test was rigorous. Mr. Greely was very impressed by the science behind the test and the quality of the people there. There were 4 authors and MTs with 30 years of experience down to newly graduated students. He said it was phenomenal to see the consensus among this group.

Ms. Rieve asked if there was a good amount of science questions. Mr. Greely stated that he saw a lot of massage questions and a small amount of science. But other people saw more science and less massage. Mr. Greely deferred to Mr. Gibbons who was one of the question writers.

Mr. Gibbons said that he wrote questions in the science group. He stated that in his group were an author, two PTs, a chiropractor, and two or three program directors. One of the goals they had in writing questions was that these questions would reflect what an entry level massage

therapist should know to communicate at a medical level. Mr. Gibbons felt the questions were appropriate for MTs in Ohio.

Ms. Chance offered that she reviewed questions last year and she felt that the questions were challenging and well thought out. Mr. Greely added that the questions were directed toward minimal competency. He added that the test was competency-based rather than regurgitating of facts.

Ms. Thompson said that someone suggested that the Federation might tailor the exam for certain states. But it sounds like this is a national exam given to all applicants equally.

Ms. Persinger stated that for the basic licensing component, that would be true. This would facilitate reciprocity. She also said, however, that there are some states who, by statute, would need to do a separate juris prudence exam. For example, New York has to add an Asian/Eastern component. So FSMTB has to add that for New York applicants. She stated that if Ohio had something like this, the FSMTB would be responsible for adding those questions in. Ohio applicants would take the MBLEX (Massage & Bodywork Licensing Exam) and then the FSMTB would tack on the extra questions.

Mr. Whitehouse asked if there was opinion floating around that Ohio's exam was too heavy in science. He asked if Ohio would be "lowering the bar" by using the national exam. Ms. Persinger answered that their content is heavy on anatomy, physiology, and has a separate section on kinesiology, pathology, contra-indications, etc. Mr. Greely opined that on Ohio's test, over the past few years, the sciences have gotten a little deep for what the average massage therapist needs to know. He said he thought it had gotten a little heavy in content that isn't as relevant. He gave an example that in terms of the urinary system or reproductive system, a general superficial knowledge should be sufficient. This is because MT's don't really work on those systems. Mr. Greely felt that some of the Ohio questions were written without remembering that this is entry level massage therapy. He said that some of this was taken care of in the joint task force but opined that the Ohio exam remains a little too heavy on the science side.

Ms. Thompson said that if anything, the Board would like to see it a little heavy on the application side. She also said it's difficult to shift it rapidly. Mr. Greely agreed saying that the schools need to have time to shift content. He agreed with Ms. Thompson about the need for more application testing. He added that he has always believed that Ohio MT's could stand side-by-side with anybody in the country on the science side. He said that on the application side, he wasn't as convinced we could do that.

Mr. Whitehouse asked for some examples of the "application side" kind of questions. Mr. Greely offered that this would be a cursory knowledge of all the techniques out there and what the application of those techniques would be. It was agreed that Kellogg was used heavily. Mr. Greely stated that Kellogg is still a very valid text but needs to have its language updated from old English.

Mr. Gibbons said that for years the schools taught to the text. As the test changed, schools had to rewrite curriculums to teach theory. The problem was that teachers were used to teaching text. That creates problems for students. As for the application issue, Mr. Gibbons said that a lot of the schools never taught syndromes because it wasn't in the text. With the FSMTB test, they put a lot of that in there. You have to know different syndromes. It would force schools to teach the theory.

Mr. Greely said that the Ohio test still tests "factoids". He felt that the federation test was more competency-based. It asked "do you understand why you're doing what you're doing."

Mr. Gibbons asked Ms. Persinger if anyone from Ohio took the test. She said that she hadn't seen the demographics yet. Ms. Rieve then asked how an Ohio MT could take the pilot test. Ms. Persinger said the requirement is that the person has completed a program through an accredited or state-approved school. Ms. Thompson asked if a licensed MT could take it. Ms. Persinger said there was no exclusion as long as the completed program requirement is met. She added that current licensees would be grandfathered in.

Ms. Stravis said that she has been licensed for 20 years but she can't take the Ohio test because her school doesn't exist anymore so there is no credential verification. Ms. Rieve said that this was a problem in Ohio that would be solved by the national exam. Ms. Persinger then stated that this segues to another project the FSMTB is working on at the request of the member boards. This is a credentialing database.

Ms. Persinger said that this would not strictly be a disciplinary database – that would be a component of it. It came out of disaster recovery after hurricane Katrina and the fact that schools come and go. The federation is looking towards being a repository for transcripts and licensing.

Mr. Greely offered that if Ohio goes with the national exam, which is competency based, perhaps we shouldn't have an hours requirement. He said that this would be a statutory change. Ms. Thompson said that in the medical part of the board (where national testing is used), there is no hours requirement. They just have to have graduated from an accredited school, pass exams, and (for doctors) get post-graduate training. This was never done for MT's because Ohio doesn't use a national exam. Mr. Gibbons offered that the national test was geared to students with 500-1000 hours of schooling. Ms. Thompson said that if it's a good test, a person going to a 200-hour school won't be able to pass anyway.

Ms. Debolt asked about the 3-day turnaround by the vendor checking credentials. Ms. Persinger said that this has been the case with complete applications for the pilot test. It may be different in October when they launch the exam. She said that the vendor, however, has a goal of three days so they are doing cross-training and will add more staff as needed.

Ms. Rieve asked if there are any issues the Board can address for FSMTB. Ms. Persinger said that they will be in touch with the Board as it gets closer to the launch so there will need to be some time set aside for that. She said that the FSMTB annual meeting is in October. She said the membership dues include sending one delegate paid for by FSMTB.

Ms. Thompson said that if the Board decides to go this direction (using the national exam), the schools will need to adjust. Mr. Greely opined that if the schools do what they're doing now, the majority of the students will do just fine.

Ms. Stravis asked if there would be a study guide. Ms. Persinger said that the content outline is up but there are no practice exams yet because they are still building their bank. But this will happen as the process continues. Ms. Stravis said this would be important for people like herself who have been MTs for many years.

The committee thanked Ms. Persinger for her presentation.

Old Business

Review and Approval of Minutes from April 2007

Mr. Greely mentioned that his name needs corrected on page one. And in subsequent pages, CTs should be changed to cosmetologists. Mr. Gibbons moved and Mr. Greely seconded to approve the minutes as amended.

Draft Rules

Ms. Rieve said that there are many schools which wait until the last minute to submit their graduation information. This created chaos at testing time. She said this rule was changed to address this problem. Rule E would be changed to say that applicants need to get their paperwork in 120 days before the exam. Rule F would be added to say that graduation information from the schools needs to be received not less than 30 days prior to the exam. Ms. Rieve said that there would be a rules hearing. She also asked Mr. Greely and Mr. Gibbons if the schools would have a problem with this rule change. They both felt this would not be a problem. This is because the college diploma is not required just the certification of hours completed/ passed. Mr. Greely stated that he would bring it up at the Council of Schools meeting on October 1. He also invited anyone to attend this meeting.

Ms. Debolt stated that she will take the rule change to the October limited branch committee meeting so she can present the Council of Schools and MTAC feedback on the rule.

Council of Schools Update

Mr. Greely stated that he was not able to attend the Council of Schools seminar but he heard that it was very well-received and attended. Those in attendance appreciated the presence of the Medical Board. (Mr. Whitehouse and Ms. Thompson represented the Board.) Mr. Whitehouse said that he felt they were well-received and was informative for him and Ms. Thompson as well. Mr. Greely said that the schools truly appreciate the communication from the Board as this has been an issue in the past.

Correspondence

Ms. Debolt stated that they like to give MTAC examples of some of the issues they have to address in the office about massage therapy. The examples she presented were dealing with aromatherapy and essential oils. Ms. Debolt said the issue really is what these are being used for. The committee members read through the correspondence. Ms. Debolt then asked if anyone was familiar with raindrop therapy. Ms. Issenman said that she practiced raindrop in Virginia. She said it was, at one time, held out to be a spa treatment. She did say that some of the oils are contra-indicative for some situations.

Ms. Debolt said that the Board has also received calls about LMT's practicing in chiropractic offices wanting to know if they could practice as chiropractic assistants. She stated that the Board has been telling them that you have to be very clear that you are not practicing as an LMT. You have to "change nametags" so to speak and can't apply MT knowledge. She opined that would be hard to do. Mr. Greely said that he gets the same questions about people who are personal trainers and massage therapists. He also said that his understanding was that chiropractors didn't have authority to delegate in their practice act. Ms. Debolt said they'd have to check with the chiropractic board about what they are allowed to delegate. But if an MT is doing ultrasound or electric stimulation they have to be careful that the patient knows they're not doing it as an MT. Mr. Gibbons said that chiropractors are hiring MTs as employees because the massage therapy can be billed.

Mr. Windham offered that chiropractors like it because they can bring one person in and get more use of one person. Ms. Debolt said that it is the MT's responsibility to make it clear how they are practicing so they don't violate their practice act. Ms. Chance wanted to know if we shouldn't go to the chiropractic board. Ms. Debolt reiterated that it is the MT's responsibility to set the appropriate boundaries. Mr. Whitehouse said that there is a business model and this will be done on an ongoing basis so it's better for us to attack it from this end.

Ms. Rieve then mentioned the last piece of correspondence which is an email from an out-of-state licensed massage therapist who can't get licensed. Mr. Gibbons asked how close are we to making those changes to statute to provide alternate avenues to taking the exam. Mr. Miller offered that there was consensus on the language so it can be taken to the Board. Mr. Greely asked if this rule can be sent to MTAC. Mr. Miller agreed to do so. Mr. Gibbons offered that it's not the medical board holding it up, it's the state law. Mr. Miller said that the timing of the legislative session would determine how quickly statute is changed.

Ms. Stravis expressed her frustration at not being able to be licensed in Ohio. She is currently licensed in Arizona where requirements are the same. In addition Arizona requires 25 CE hours each renewal. She has been working as an LMT since 1994. Mr. Greely said that this is why they are trying to change statute. He said that Mr. Whitehouse's predecessor once said that it wasn't the board's job to keep out qualified individuals but to just ensure quality. This is what spurred this effort. He offered that MTAC and the Board sympathized with her situation but stated that the Board has to abide by statute. So really the change is up to the state legislature to approve.

Ms. Issenman mentioned that the website needed to be updated with the new curriculum requirements. Ms. Rieve mentioned that there are many changes that need to be made to the

website but they were delayed due to the move. Ms. Issenman then wanted to know more about the timing of the change to statute. She is deciding if she has a future in massage therapy in Ohio or does she seek another avenue. She offered to help in any way possible. Mr. Miller said that we need to get the Board's input first, then we'll know the next step.

Ms. Stravis asked what the parameters of massage therapy are in Ohio. Ms. Rieve said that in Ohio, massage therapy is considered a limited branch of medicine. MT's can't diagnose, but they can assess. Ms. Stravis wondered how that differed from Arizona. Ms. Debolt read the definition of massage therapy from the Ohio statute.

Ms. Chance asked about continuing education. Mr. Miller said it was discussed but there was some disagreement. He opined that we probably wanted the licensing issue handled first. The meeting concluded with brief discussion about the fact that there will be a rules hearing once these new rules are proposed.

Ms. Rieve mentioned that the next meeting would be October 18. Mr. Gibbons moved and Mr. Greely seconded that the meeting be adjourned. The meeting was so adjourned at 2:40 p.m.