

Celebrating 100 Years of Massage Therapy Regulation

Massage Therapy: Where Did It Begin?

Massage Therapy has been part of healthcare for centuries.

While there is no written record for much of the very early period, it's generally accepted that a form of Massage Therapy care was practised by early civilizations around the world – in places like China, Greece and Italy.

There is also little documentation around how Massage Therapy care emerged in Canada. Researchers believe that the first wave of practitioners, known as “masseurs/ masseuses”, hailed from different pockets of Europe, especially Sweden, Finland, Germany, Hungary and England. The practice of Massage Therapy across Europe was wide-spread and recognized by the medical profession as an important method of healing.

During the First World War, it became apparent that wounded Canadian soldiers could benefit from Massage Therapy treatment as part of their recovery. The Army trained groups of nurses in Massage Therapy and sent them to rehabilitation hospitals in England to provide Massage Therapy as a daily part of the soldiers' medical treatment.

In 1919, Massage Therapy became a regulated healthcare profession in Ontario.

Over time, Massage Therapy gained traction across the province. The *Drugless Practitioners Act* required Massage Therapists to be properly trained and registered. The Board of Regents was established to govern all branches of drugless therapy and all Massage Therapists were required to pass an examination and prove that were qualified to practise. During the 1930s, there were about 250 Massage Therapists (registrants). At the time, Massage Therapy treatment was provided on a hard-wooden table and used mainly to reduce stress and manage physical pain.

In 1935, each branch of drugless therapy received their own Board. The “Board of Directors of Masseurs” was established as a separate entity to govern the profession. The following year, Massage Therapists formed a network to advocate on behalf of the profession – called “Associated Masseurs” – which much later became what's known today as the Registered Massage Therapists' Association of Ontario (RMTAO).

The number of Massage Therapists has grown steadily over the years. Today, there are some 14,000 Massage Therapists registered with the College of Massage Therapists of Ontario. Our College is currently one of 26 Ontario Health Regulators that regulate 28 distinct healthcare professions in the province.

This year, we're proud to mark the 100th anniversary of regulation in Massage Therapy care. Take a look at the timeline below to see how the regulation of Massage Therapy has evolved over the past century.

100 Years of Quality, Integrity and Competence in Massage Therapy: A Historical Timeline

2019	This year marks the 100 th anniversary of Massage Therapy regulation in Ontario.
2019	Massage Therapy becomes a regulated profession in Prince Edward Island on March 1, 2019.
2018	Registration at the College of Massage Therapists of Ontario (CMTO) reaches 14,567 Massage Therapists.
2016	The four member Colleges of the Federation of Massage Therapy Regulatory Authorities of Canada (FOMTRAC) release an update to the <i>Interjurisdictional Practice Competencies and Performance Indicators for Massage Therapists at Entry-to-Practice (PCs/PIs)</i> .
2014	The Canadian Massage Therapy Council for Accreditation (CMTCA) is established to approve Massage Therapy programs from coast-to-coast.
2013	Registration at CMTO surpasses 12,000. The College introduces new <i>Practice Competencies and Performance Indicators (PC/PIs) for the Use of Acupuncture by Massage Therapists in Ontario</i> .
2012	FOMTRAC adopts the <i>Interjurisdictional Practice Competencies and Performance Indicators for Massage Therapists at Entry-to-Practice (PCs/PIs)</i> , a benchmark that ensures Canadians receive safe and effective Massage Therapy care.
2010	The Ontario Massage Therapist Association (OMTA) is renamed to the Registered Massage Therapists' Association of Ontario (RMTAO).
2009	CMTO regulates 10,500 Massage Therapists.
2003	The Federation of Massage Therapy Regulatory Authorities of Canada (FOMTRAC) is established to promote a common national entry-level education standard in Massage Therapy care.
2002	CMTO oversees 6,000 registrants.
1994	On Jan. 1 st , 1994, the <i>Regulated Health Profession Act, 1991</i> , is proclaimed.

1991	CMTO is established to replace the Board of Directors of Masseurs after the <i>Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991</i> is introduced.
1946	The Canadian College of Massage & Hydrotherapy is established to train Massage Therapists across Canada.
1936	The Ontario Massage Therapist Association (OMTA) was formed to advocate on behalf of Massage Therapists.
1935	The province of Ontario expands the professional recognition of Massage Therapy through the <i>Drugless Practitioners Act (DPA)</i> .
1925	The <i>Drugless Practitioners Act (DPA)</i> establishes register of physiotherapeutic and massage practitioners.
1919	The <i>Drugless Practitioners Act (DPA)</i> is passed in the province of Ontario (revised in 1925).