

Good afternoon Mr. Chair and members of the Committee. My name is Monica Miller and I have been a massage therapist in Nova Scotia for over 16 years. I am also a clinic owner in Tantallon and currently serve as Chair for the Investigations Committee for MTANS (Massage Therapists' Association of Nova Scotia). Thank you for the opportunity to speak in support of Bill 193, the Massage Therapists Titles Protection Act.

In the years that I have been working in the profession of massage therapy we have seen a substantial increase in the use of massage therapy as an effective treatment protocol for things such as non-pharmacological pain reduction, sports injuries, post-surgical rehabilitation, workplace injury, concussion, chronic illness/disability, motor vehicle accidents, and, more so lately, in the treatment of PTSD and anxiety disorders.

Massage therapists work alongside physiotherapists, chiropractors and mental health teams. We receive referrals from family medical doctors, specialists, and dentists and work with a variety of patients from infants and children to the senior population.

We assess and treat patients with sometimes complex health issues and, as in any health care profession, it is vital that massage therapists have a thorough understanding of human anatomy and physiology as well as disease processes in order to safely and effectively treat.

As you may be aware, there are a few professional associations who advocate for the profession of massage therapy in Nova Scotia, however, until now, with this proposed Bill, there has been nothing in place to protect the public from unqualified or unsafe massage therapists.

I am a graduate of a 2200-hour program in massage therapy and some of the most valuable and far reaching lessons I learned have been respect for persons, respecting patient boundaries, and ethics in care. The people I see have confidence in the care they are receiving. It is up to me, as the health care practitioner, to advise my patients when what kind of treatment would be most appropriate, how frequently they will require treatment, and what the expected outcome would be. It is also my duty to advise patients when massage therapy may not be appropriate or when modifications to treatment may be required. It's my responsibility to know what techniques should not be used in treating certain health conditions. My patients trust me to make treatment decisions that are in their best interest.

Having said this, there are those who work outside the scope of massage therapy, who do not join a recognized association for massage therapy advocacy because they do not meet the standards, who do not meet the minimum educational requirement of 2200 hours (nationally recognized as the highest standard of education in massage therapy in North America), and who offer massage "services" without appropriate professional liability insurance. While we believe this population of individuals is small, it is not without risk of harm to the public.

By protecting the title of Massage Therapist, we are ensuring that the public can have some assurances that the massage care they receive is being done by people with the highest standards of practice, by people who will ensure their safe and ethical treatment, and who will maintain professional boundaries. As public awareness on the health care advantages and benefits of massage therapy grows, so does the

risk of harm from unqualified practitioners. MTANS alone has seen its membership grow from slightly over 400 members when I initially joined to what is now over 1200 active massage therapists. Our profession is rapidly growing and so is the public interest in seeing massage therapy regulated. It has been far too easy for far too long for just anyone to hang a sign on their door and state they offer "massage" without any regulatory oversight or assurances for public safety or accountability.

In my role as Chair of Investigations for MTANS I oversee a committee of 9 other massage therapists. We investigate complaints made by the public about our members. I wanted to come here not only as a massage therapist but in this role as well to place emphasis on the need for full regulation of massage therapy. It is essential that Bill 193 not only go into full effect but that it eventually become part of a broader regulation for the profession.

I would like to thank you for your time this afternoon in hearing our statements of support as well as the Honourable Randy Delorey for bringing Bill 193 forward as a vital first step in the regulation of the profession of Massage Therapy.

Warmly,

Monica Miller, MT

Momentum Wellness

Investigations Chair for MTANS