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**POLICY TO ALLOW MASSAGE SCHOOLS THE OPTION OF
REMOTE CLINICAL HOURS FOR MASSAGE THERAPY
STUDENTS DURING COVID STATE OF EMERGENCY**

*Approved by Massachusetts Board of Registration of
Massage Therapy on November 30, 2020 (amended
January 11, 2021 and March 8, 2021).*

Board regulation, 269 CMR 3.01(2)(e), requires that an applicant for massage licensure complete “a Board-approved course of study, including a minimum of 650 classroom hours or an equivalent number of credit hours of supervised instruction at a Licensed Massage School, including 300 supervised classroom hours in Massage Theory and Technique, 150 hours of which meet the definition of “massage” in M.G.L. c. 112, §§ 227 and 228(a), and including 100 hours of unpaid and supervised clinical or externship experience.”

On March 10, 2020, Governor Charles Baker declared a State of Emergency in the Commonwealth to Respond to COVID-19.

On March 26, 2020, in consideration of the Governor's Declaration of Emergency, the Board of Registration of Massage Therapy ("the Board") authorized Licensed Massage Schools to offer online distance learning during the state of emergency for all required Massage Therapy programs, except 150 hours of Theory and Technique and the required 100 clinical hours. Massage Schools seeking to convert a portion of their programs to online distance learning during the state of emergency should submit their plans for online curriculum to the Board for approval.

At meetings on November 9th and 30th 2020, the Board heard about the difficulties and concerns that some massage therapy schools and their students have with offering massage to members of the public at school clinics during the COVID 19 pandemic. The school and students expressed health concerns because massage is a close personal service, and operational concerns due to fewer members of the public seeking massage at school clinics during COVID, especially as numbers of positive cases have increased in recent weeks.

The Board determined that during the COVID 19 State of Emergency in Massachusetts, Licensed Massage Schools may allow students to obtain the required 100 clinic hours through remote means. Specifically, the Massage Board authorized schools to allow students to gain credit for clinic hours outside a clinic or externship, by massaging family members or other individuals with whom the student feels safe during the pandemic.

The remote work must adhere to the following protocols. Before any remote work is allowed, the student's instructor/supervisor shall determine that the student is capable of performing clinic work under indirect supervision and that the instructor will be providing indirect supervision of the student's remote work. The student must follow the protocols that would be required when performing massage in the clinic setting and cannot be paid for any massages provided. Each remote client must fill out a detailed feedback form provided by the school for review by the school supervisor. After performing twenty-four hours of remote massage, the student must participate in a one hour check-in session, which can be held remotely, with their supervisor to discuss the student's clinical work, including the student's experiences providing the massages, the feedback received from clients, questions the student may have, and the instructor's comments and guidance for the student. After participating in a

check in with the supervisor, the student may obtain an additional 24 hours of remote clinical hours before another remote-check in with the supervisor is required. In this manner, the student will be allowed to complete their 100 supervised clinical hours by performing 96 hours of remote massage work under indirect supervision, documented with completed client surveys, and 4 hours of consultation with their supervisor. If the program the student is enrolled in requires more than 100 practice massages, the student may complete those further massages remotely in the same fashion as the previous 100 hours.

Students may not hold themselves out as licensed massage therapists and shall not be compensated for massages. No credit for remote clinical hours will be given for work performed prior to the issue date of this policy. The massage school shall provide a copy of this policy to any student that will be performing remote clinic hours.

Per Board vote on January 11, 2021, the policies stated above will terminate on March 31, 2021, unless specifically extended by vote of the Board.

Per Board vote on March 8, 2021, the policies stated above were extended until May 31, 2021. The policies will terminate on that date, unless specifically extended by vote of the Board.