

AMTA NJ Government Relations Committee Notice Posted 6/8/2020:

CLARIFICATION ON JUNE 22 REOPENING

Dear members and colleagues,

There is some confusion when we are to reopen during Phase 2. Please see below and read the Government Relations Report. Sorry for the confusion!

June 22 is the target date for opening, but NOT DEFINITE YET....the plan is to include us, but we still do not have the definite guidelines for MBT. Hopefully this week we will know. In the meantime, please read the annual chapter GR Report:

VIRTUAL ANNUAL CHAPTER MEETING GR REPORT

Needless to say we are navigating a journey that is unprecedented in our times and is a global public health and economic challenge. Your New Jersey Chapter Board of Directors with your Government Relations Committee have been working in cooperation with our lobbyist and our national office, to stay current on changes affecting the practice of Massage Therapy on your behalf, and to provide you with pertinent information.

Our current status, according to our lobbyist Christina Zuk of PPAG is as follows:

COVID-19 Mitigation & Reopening

Following the Governor's aggressive response to the COVID-19 pandemic in New Jersey, hospitalization and fatality rates related to COVID have significantly decreased. As a result, the Governor has begun re-opening parts of the economy with restrictions and continued mitigation efforts in place. Throughout this process, AMTANJ & PPAG have been regularly communicating with the Governor's office with recommendations to ensure

the safety of our members and clients/patients as massage and bodywork therapy resumes.

On June 1st, the Governor announced the state's entrance into the beginning of phase two of his three phase re-opening plan. As part of that phase, personal care services will begin gradually re-opening beginning on June 22nd. As we understand it, massage and bodywork therapy establishments will be included in this stage, and the Governor's office is in the process of drafting guidance for all establishments opening on that date.

AMTANJ & PPAG have been in communication with the Governor's office as this guidance is drafted, and have provided thoughts and recommendations on how to best protect our clients and membership in the process.

Legislation

In addition to our work as it relates to COVID, AMTANJ has identified a number of instances in which municipalities have passed ordinances limiting the ability of massage and bodywork therapists to practice to the fullest extent of their license. PPAG is working with AMTANJ to draft legislation that would prevent municipalities from developing these patchwork policies throughout the state. We are currently seeking sponsors to advance this preemption issue in the current session, while being mindful of our timing given the public health crisis.

AMTANJ & PPAG are also seeking legislation that will give massage therapists the ability to more easily practice in other states – in other words – legislation granting them reciprocity. Again, we are being mindful of our timing given the public health and economic crisis.

In addition to this priority legislation, PPAG has worked with AMTANJ to voice concerns about pending legislation that seeks to further regulate the massage industry. Specifically, we have met with Assemblywoman Valerie Vainieri-Huttle regarding legislation that "regulates employers operating massage and bodywork therapy establishments." We have offered suggested changes to the legislation on behalf of AMTANJ. We will

continue to work to address the issues raised by AMTANJ with both Assemblywoman Huttie and Senator Declan O'Scanlon, the sponsor of the Senate version of this bill.

And last, AMTANJ is seeking legislation that would change the reference to massage and bodywork therapy practices from the outdated term "massage parlor."

Licensure Changes

Proof of mandatory practice liability insurance enacted 4/21/2020. Licensees are required to have coverage by a professional liability policy in a minimum amounts of \$1,000,000 per occurrence and \$3,000,000 aggregate per policy year.

Duty to report any known wrong doing of another licensee or business establishment that provides massage therapy: i.e. unauthorized practice; practicing under the influence of alcohol or illegal substances; violating scope of practice rule; failure to comply with sanitation standards and other violation of Chapter 13.37A.