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South Dakota MTs Protest Law

A group of South Dakota massage practitioners is protesting what it deems an unfair licensing law passed in 2005.

United Massage Professionals Association of South Dakota's purpose is to "inform therapists, bodyworkers and the general public why this law is unnecessary in the state of South Dakota, and how it affects our businesses, services and our profession," according Victoria Pennock, spokesperson for the group.

Central to the group's complaint are fees, which went into effect on Nov. 1, including a \$100 application fee and a \$200 licensing fee every two years, says Pennock. Plus, massage therapists in Sioux Falls must still pay city licensing and massage-establishment fees.

The group also objects to how the law was pushed through, without broad-based input or support.

According to Pennock, of the 450 known massage therapists in the state, only "a select few" from the state chapter of the American Massage Therapy Association were involved in the legislative effort, while most therapists were unaware that an effort was underway.

Associated Bodywork and Massage Professionals has offered assistance to the group if it wants to draft new legislation to amend the current law.



For more information about state laws, visit <http://massagemag.com/Resources>.

Hospital Recruits Reiki Volunteers

When Emerson Hospital, located in the Boston, Massachusetts, suburb of Concord, put out the call in September for volunteer reiki practitioners, the response was "overwhelming," according Sharon Knox, director of community services for the hospital.

The practitioners agree to a one-year commitment to provide 15-minute sessions to oncology patients in the hospital's Bethke Cancer Center, one day per week. "Oncology patients are dealing with the issue of throbbing pain and have trouble sleeping and resting," says Knox. "That's the population we'll be focusing on first."

For the past five years, an in-hospital complementary-therapy group has met to educate nurses and other staff about reiki, massage and other complementary approaches to health, Knox explains. A staff physical therapist, who is also a reiki master, has even certified some of the nurses in levels one and two reiki. "The problem is they don't have the time to do the reiki service, so we decided to open it up to volunteers," Knox says.

Patients will receive promotional information about the new reiki service, and volunteers will introduce themselves around the hospital. The goal is to make it available to any patient who wants it, Knox says.

"We hope [the program] will do nothing but continue to grow," she says.

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