



Notice to the Profession Legalization of Cannabis

Applies to Registered Massage Therapists

The College of Complementary Health Professionals of BC was created on June 28, 2024 through the amalgamation of four health regulatory colleges:

- College of Chiropractors of BC
- College of Massage Therapists of BC
- College of Naturopathic Physicians of BC
- College of Traditional Chinese Medicine Practitioners and Acupuncturists of BC

All current requirements for standards of clinical and ethical practice issued by the four colleges remain in place upon amalgamation.

This document was created by the College of Massage Therapists of BC and will be updated to reflect the amalgamation.

Notice to the Profession

October 12, 2018

Legalization of Cannabis

Introduction

As of October 17, 2018, the [Cannabis Act](#) and associated regulations will come into force. The recreational use of cannabis will be legal for adults who are 19 years of age or older, with certain conditions. Access to cannabis for medical purposes, which is currently administered under the *Access to Cannabis for Medical Purposes Regulations*, will now be administered under the *Cannabis Act* and associated regulations.

Impact on Massage Therapy Practice

The College has received questions from RMTs about how the legalization of marijuana will impact massage therapy practice. Therefore, the College is providing the following guidance to the profession

1. Recreational or Medical Use of Cannabis by Patients

RMTs have asked what to do if a patient seeks massage therapy treatment while exhibiting signs of having recently used cannabis, or if a patient discloses the recent use of cannabis, whether recreational or medical.

- RMTs must obtain informed consent for therapeutic services. In order to provide informed consent, the patient must be capable of providing consent.
- If the patient is unable to consent to treatment due to impairment by drugs (legal or otherwise), alcohol or another substance, or it is unclear whether the patient is able to consent to treatment, then the RMT is advised not to proceed with treatment.
- RMTs are advised that it is not within their scope of practice to provide information or advice about how cannabis may affect a person's health. RMTs are advised to direct patients with these types of questions to a physician or other health professional whose scope of practice allows for the discussion or recommendation of cannabis.

2. Recreational or Prescribed Use of Cannabis by RMTs

The College's Code of Ethics states that RMTs must not practice massage therapy while impaired. In the context of cannabis use, this applies regardless of whether an RMT is using cannabis for a prescribed or a recreational purpose.

- The use of any drug or substance, whether prescribed or recreational, has the potential to compromise the ability to provide safe and effective care to patients. If the substance affects communication, professional judgment or decision-making skills, then RMTs must refrain from practicing massage therapy while taking the drug or substance or while feeling its effects.

3. Use of Cannabis Oil and/or CBD in Treatment

A number of RMTs have asked CMTBC whether they may apply cannabis oil or oil/lotion containing cannabidiol (CBD) as part of the provision of massage therapy.

The *Cannabis Act* and associated regulations do not expressly authorize RMTs (or any other health care practitioners) to apply cannabis oil or oil/lotion containing CBD as part of the provision of health care. The College has asked the Ministry of Health for its position as to whether the application of cannabis oil or a CBD product could be considered within the scope of practice for massage therapy, as defined by [section 1 of the *Massage Therapists Regulation*](#).

- CMTBC advises RMTs not to apply or administer cannabis oil or a CBD product to a patient unless and until such time as the College provides confirmation that it may be considered within the scope of practice for massage therapy.

What is Cannabis?

Under section 2 of the *Cannabis Act*:

- “cannabis” means a cannabis plant [and any part of a cannabis plant, including the phytocannabinoids produced by, or found in, such a plant, regardless of whether that part has been processed or not (other than a non-viable seed of a cannabis plant, a mature stalk without any leaf, flower, seed or branch of such a plant, fibre derived from such a stalk, or the root or any part of the root of such a plant), as well as any substance or mixture of substances that contains or has on it any part of such a plant or any substance that is identical to any phytocannabinoid produced by, or found in, such a plant, regardless of how the substance was obtained.]