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## **New Organization Formed to Benefit Massage Therapy**

By Cliff Korn, BS, LMT, NCTMB

Associated Bodywork & Massage Professionals (ABMP) hosted a meeting, May 11-12, 2005, in Denver, Colo., to initiate conversation that is potentially the most significant massage news of the decade, and will certainly be of interest to the majority of massage therapists in the U.S.

Initiated by ABMP President Bob Benson and Executive Vice-President Les Sweeney, the meeting had two main objectives: 1) to discuss the potential formation of an alliance or federation of state massage therapy boards, and 2) to discuss the potential development of a new entry-level examination for prospective massage licensees.

The purpose of the two-day meeting was not to seek definitive answers about these two issues, but rather to explore whether there exists the need for a consortium of state boards and a new entry-level examination. It was postulated up front that if those needs were deemed vital, a logical next step might be to hold a meeting in the fall involving a broad cross-section of representatives of state massage licensing bodies.

Discussions focused on how participants could help massage boards maximize their potential and advance individual qualifications to practice in a cost-effective and timely manner. Ultimately, the group determined that the profession could potentially benefit from progress in those arenas in terms of alternative exam choices and increased consistency among licensing requirements in different states, which would result in improved reciprocity and portability.

Meeting participants included current and past members of state massage boards and massage therapy educators. Three attendees were directly involved in a previous (now defunct) organization, the National Alliance of State Massage Therapy Boards (See related story, [www.massagetoday.com/archives/2001/04/02.html](http://www.massagetoday.com/archives/2001/04/02.html)), and agreed to provide the groundwork for the Federation of State Massage Therapy Boards, the new coalition of state massage boards that the group

unanimously consented to move forward with.

The group also reached a consensus to invite the massage licensing bodies in the 35 regulated states and the District of Columbia to participate in the newly formed Federation. Further group consensus determined that the Federation was the appropriate group to develop the parameters for the development and implementation of a new licensing examination.

An interim board of directors was chosen until a meeting of the broad base of massage therapy boards can be convened. Serving on the interim board are Arnold Askew (Alabama Board of Massage Therapy); Kathleen Egenes (New Mexico Massage Therapy Board); Patty Glenn (Oregon Board of Massage Therapists); Kathy Jensen (Iowa Massage Therapy Board); Michael Jordan (Oregon Board of Massage Therapists); Christine Kiely (New Hampshire Advisory Board of Massage Therapy); Daisy Millett (North Carolina Board of Massage & Bodywork Therapy); Dave Quiring (Florida Board of Massage Therapy); and Rick Rosen (Body Therapy Institute, NC). Rosen and Glenn were selected to fill the respective roles of interim Chair and interim Vice-Chair.

A second meeting designed to include additional massage boards and stakeholders that wish to participate has been scheduled and confirmed for Sept. 20-22, 2005, in Albuquerque, NM.

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