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## **We've Made It!**

By Ralph Stephens, BS, LMT, NCTMB

Massage therapy has finally arrived as a significant player in health care. How do I know? From the article, "Setting the Record Straight," by Rebecca J. Razo in the June issue of this fine publication ([www.massagetoday.com/archives/2004/06/02.html](http://www.massagetoday.com/archives/2004/06/02.html)).

When I read that well-written article, my heart jumped with joy. I shouted, "Alright, we're there - we've finally gotten to them!" Massage has finally tripped the radar of the allopaths, and they have begun their typical attack.

The medical "cartel" does this whenever some product or procedure begins to affect their bottom line. They start attacking it, trying to discredit it. Their first effort is always to scare people away from alternative providers and products, and back into their clutches by labeling the alternative dangerous, unsafe, unproven, blah, blah, blah.

If they can't accomplish that, they demand to control access to the alternative. If you haven't noticed, they have been pulling this same cowardly, poverty conscious routine on the chiropractic profession for decades. They go after any natural food supplement, herb or remedy that becomes popular and negatively impacts the sale of pharmaceuticals. The highest acknowledgement the medical-pharmaceutical cartel can give is its effort to eliminate or control you. It is the true measure of your success and effectiveness.

Do not get down about this "hit" piece; it is great news! We are hurting the allopath's bottom line. We are reaching enough people that they are getting upset. This is just the first of many hit pieces to come. Rejoice! Don't worry; be happy! It means we are winning. The allopaths' efforts have not stopped the growth of chiropractic, and they will not stop the growth of massage, unless we sell out to the allopaths by giving control to them.

I have carefully observed the attacks on DCs and the natural food and supplement industries for many years. This hit piece against massage perfectly fits the pattern they used against chiropractic. The media always allows some individual physician to make outrageous, unchallenged statements about some product or alternative therapy that sound plausible to the untrained lay person. When challenged, the physician backpedals, but the media never does an effective retraction. If they even do one at all, they bury it or minimize it.

When Dr. Robert Gotlin was challenged, he said, "Massage therapy is an excellent modality choice if not contraindicated." Well, duh - If that is what he really believes, why didn't he say that? He is like a racist saying, "I'm not a racist, some of my best friends are black, Asian, Indian, etc." The good doctor (I'm being generous here) expresses his real complaint when he says his concern is for those who self-treat without seeking appropriate medical care. What this means is, he thinks doctors should be in control of who can receive massage. He wants his office visit fee; he wants to control who can get massage, how often, and what type. Dr. Gotlin says he does not care if someone without pain gets a nice, relaxing massage. You see, that is all they thought we were doing. That is why they have left us alone this long. Now they are figuring out what massage can really do (and is doing) and they want control of it - to suppress it. (Hey, you up there in New York; anyone ever gotten a referral from the good Dr. Gotlin?)

I wonder how concerned Dr. Gotlin is about the 783,936 people murdered each year - (oh, come on Ralph, don't use such emotionally inflammatory language); all right, just killed - by his conventional medicine "colleagues" in America? (Oh, by the way: Those are just the ones they admit to in their own publications.) The leading cause of death and injury in America is the medical system. Talk about dangerous, unsafe and unproven! What about the 2.2 million people per year having in-hospital adverse reactions to prescription drugs; the 7.5 million unnecessary medical and surgical procedures performed annually; or the 8.9 million people hospitalized unnecessarily each year?

Why isn't Dr. Gotlin -- or the media -- concerned about this? For the answer, just follow the money trail. You should read the study, "Death by Medicine" at [www.lef.org/magazine/mag2004/mar2004\\_aws\\_i\\_death\\_01.htm](http://www.lef.org/magazine/mag2004/mar2004_aws_i_death_01.htm).\*\* We should be sharing it with everyone we can. The public needs to know how it is being systematically abused by the medical-pharmaceutical cartel, and its blind trust in the "conventional medical system" needs to be broken.

When this happens, people will begin to take better care of themselves, and alternative providers will come to the forefront of health care, where they should be. Kudos to the 10,000-plus licensed massage therapists in New York who are doing such good work. New York has a strong massage law, higher than average standards, and its own exam -- and it's working. Keep those storefronts open and keep helping people!

### **Unfinished Business**

Something to think about: To those who believe "It is a massage, not brain surgery"; that there is no need to increase entry-level standards because it cannot be proven that therapists with 500 hours of training or fewer cause harm; or resist regulation, licensure, standards, and continuing education, one observant reader asks, "Why are our associations billing us for 3-to-6-million-dollar malpractice/liability insurance policies?" Why are massage therapists joining organizations just to get insurance and why are they carrying so much of it? Hmm....

**A Practical Massage Tip:** Fascia is not inert connective tissue that merely transitions from a more dense "gel" state to its more fluid "sol" state. It is densely innervated with mechanoreceptors, which respond to appropriate manual pressure, lowering sympathetic tonus. Fascia also contains smooth muscle fibers, allowing the nervous system to tension the fascial sheaths. One type of fascial pressure receptor group, the Ruffini ending, responds to tangential pressures and lateral stretch, lowering sympathetic nervous system activity. Next time you are holding a stubborn tender point or trigger point, try adding slight, subtle sideways pressure, preferably cross-fiber and see if you get a faster or larger release or change in the tissue. See you in September - when I will weigh in on the "medical massage" debate. Have a great summer!

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Click [here](#) for more information about Ralph Stephens, BS, LMT, NCTMB.



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