

Massage Therapy in Alberta:
Use, Satisfaction, Funding, and Opinions about an Alberta College of Massage Therapists

by

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Abstract

This paper examines Albertans' uses, funding sources for, and evaluations of massage services. It also explores public opinion about the regulatory status of the massage therapy profession in the Canadian province of Alberta.

Relaxation Massage

Approximately one-quarter of all adult Albertans (24.5% in 2016 and 28.7% in 2017) received relaxation massage therapy services in the previous twelve months (between 800,000 and one million Albertans). No significant regional differences in service access are measured but several important demographic differences emerge with women, upper income, and middle-aged Albertans most likely to have received relaxation massage services. Albertans who received a relaxation massage rated the benefits very positively, with an overall mean rating of 7.7 on a scale ranging from one (no benefit) to 10 (extremely beneficial). Women evaluated benefits even higher than did men. A majority of Albertans who received relaxation massage services paid for those services with their own funds while a significant plurality paid through their employment benefits packages.

Therapeutic Massage

Approximately one-third of Albertans (33.0% in 2016 and 34.5% in 2017) received therapeutic massage services in the previous twelve months (well over one million Albertans.) No significant regional variations in service access are measured. Again, women are more likely than men to have received therapeutic massage services, but Alberta men are nearly twice as likely to have received therapeutic massage treatment as they were to have received relaxation massage services. Albertans who received therapeutic massage services rated the service very positively, with an overall mean rating of 8.4 on a scale ranging from one (no benefit) to 10 (extremely beneficial).

Two of every five Albertans (40.0%) who received therapeutic massage services paid for those services with their own funds. Over one-third paid through their employment benefits plans while a further one-fifth paid through their private extended health plans. A significant number of Albertans were referred to their massage therapist by a physician, but more chose therapeutic massage services because of personal research, opinion or preference, or because a friend or family member referred them.

Awareness of Unregulated Professional Status of Massage Therapy Services in Alberta and Support for the Establishment of an Alberta College of Massage Therapists

A substantial majority of Albertans (62.3% in 2016 and 61.0% in 2017) were not aware of the unregulated professional status of the Alberta massage therapy industry. The vast majority of Albertans (91.9% in 2016 and 90.8% in 2017) support the establishment of an Alberta college of massage therapists.

Introduction

This paper examines to what extent Albertans access massage therapy services, their satisfaction with and means of financing the services they accessed, their overall understanding of the regulatory status of the massage therapy industry in Alberta, and their levels of support for the establishment of an Alberta college of massage therapists. After a brief description of the regulatory environment in the province of Alberta and efforts at reform over the past couple of decades, and a brief description of the methodology associated with the two data sets upon which the analysis is based, we will analyze how much Albertans are accessing massage therapy services, their evaluations of the benefits of services received, and funding sources for those services. We will also analyze Albertans' awareness of the regulatory status of massage therapy in the province and their support for including massage therapy in the Alberta Health Professions Act and the establishment of an Alberta college of massage therapists.

Regulatory Environment and Background

The Canadian constitution assigns jurisdictional authority over health care to the provinces, hence, it is up to each of the ten sub-national governments to establish a legislative framework for regulating healthcare professions. Healthcare providers in Alberta are governed under the Health Professions Act.¹ The Act identifies and applies to 29 specific medical professions. Unlike in several other Canadian provinces, massage therapy is not enumerated within the Alberta health professions legislation and therefore has no professional college to govern practitioners and the Alberta massage industry more generally.

The Alberta massage therapy profession is comprised of a diverse group of practitioners who come from many walks of life and enter the profession at various stages in their career paths and lives. They work in a wide variety of setting, including as paid employees alongside chiropractors and physiotherapists, in spas, health facilities, recreation facilities, and in standalone clinics or out of their homes. This diversity has contributed to the ongoing debate, twenty years and counting, within the Alberta massage profession about how best to approach the regulatory issue and the establishment of a professional college of massage therapists. For example, after years of discussions, in 2004 the short lived Alberta Registered Massage Therapists Society (ARMTS) was established with the aim of coordinating support to open and amend the Alberta Health Professions Act to include massage therapy as a regulated health profession. Although this effort was ultimately unsuccessful, and ARMTS was disbanded, the desire among many practitioners for regulated health profession status remained.

In 2008 the three professional massage associations in Alberta, the Massage Therapists Association of Alberta (MTAA), the Natural Health Practitioners of Canada (NHPC formerly the Association of Massage Therapists and Wholistic Practitioners - AMTWP) and the Remedial Massage Therapists Association (RMTA) jointly appeared before the Alberta Health Professions Advisory Board to make the case for massage therapy to be regulated under the Health Professions Act. But the three associations failed to find common ground and by 2011 their Transitional Steering Committee was disbanded and discussions ceases. In 2013 the Alberta Minister of Health and Wellness was planning to conduct a survey of the industry in an effort at understanding what practitioners thought about professional regulatory status but the project was suspended due to budget constraints.

Concurrently, at the urging of their members the three Alberta associations began another effort at developing a framework and transitional plan to move massage therapists into a regulatory college. They began with an industry survey which indicated that the majority of massage therapists in the province support regulation. Taking these results into account, the organizations developed a transitional plan for regulation that would recognize both training and experience. In 2016 an amended application for regulation was delivered to the Department of Health while the three associations continued to consult with their members. For a more complete history of the Alberta regulatory environment as it applies to the massage therapy industry, please see *Massage Therapists Association of Alberta*.²

¹ Province of Alberta, [Health Professions Act](#) Revised Statutes of Alberta 2000, Chapter H-7, current as of January 1, 2017.

² © 2016 [Massage Therapist Association of Alberta](#) - Updated July 25, 2016.

As is appropriate, most of the focus over the past two decades has been on practitioners and the coordinating efforts of the voluntary associations that represent them and their industry. As educators, we also had an interest in understanding how much access to and use of massage services Albertans are making, their satisfaction levels with services received, and their understanding of and support for, or opposition to, the establishment of an Alberta College of Massage Therapists. To that end, we included questions in our Alberta omnibus public opinion poll, conducted annually by the [Citizen Society Research Lab](#) (CSRL) at Lethbridge College, in the fall of 2016 and again in the fall of 2017.

Methodology

These data are part of larger studies of the opinions and attitudes of Alberta residents conducted by the Citizen Society Research Lab.³ Questions were designed by massage therapy faculty and incorporated into the CSRL's annual Alberta omnibus questionnaire. Acknowledging that all massage services can provide therapeutic benefits, including but not limited to stress relief and the corresponding mental health benefits achieved by relaxation massage, we distinguished between massage treatments designed for relaxation purposes, most likely received at spas, resorts and wellness centers and therapeutic massage services most often received in clinical settings and designed to treat deep tissue issues. As such, we asked respondents if they had received either type of massage service in the past twelve months, and if so, how they would rate the benefits of their treatment, by what means was the service paid for, and in the case of therapeutic massage, why the respondent chose massage as therapy. We also asked all respondents if they were aware of the regulatory status of the massage industry in Alberta and how much they support or oppose the establishment of an Alberta College of Massage Therapists. Full question wording can be found in Appendix A below.

The province of Alberta had a total population of approximately 4.2 to 4.3 million residents in 2016 and 2017 (Statistics Canada) approximately 78% of which are 18 years of age or older for an adult population of approximately 3.3 million. Lethbridge College students enrolled in classes in six college programs, including massage therapy, collected the sample data using on-campus call center facilities under the supervision of principal investigator Faron Ellis, Research Chair at CSRL. In the fall of 2016, students interviewed 1,513 adult Alberta residents by telephone from October 1 to 8. In the fall of 2017, students interviewed 1,481 residents from September 30 to October 5, 2017. Landline telephone numbers were selected from a sample drawn from InfoCanada directories and supplemented with a selection of mobile numbers from CSRL lists. Analysis of the demographic data indicates that, within acceptable limits, the samples accurately represents the demographic distribution of the adult population within the province of Alberta. The samples have been statistically weighted where necessary to even better reflect the demographic distribution of the population (gender, region of province and age). The weighted samples yield confidence intervals of ± 2.5 percentage points in 2016 and 2.55 percentage points in 2017, both at confidence levels of 95%. The margin of error increases when analyzing subsets of the sample.⁴ Most of our focus will be on the more comprehensive 2016 data with notations about 2017 data where appropriate.

³ For results from other items included in these polls please see [Citizen Society Research Lab - www.lethbridgecollege.ca](http://www.lethbridgecollege.ca).

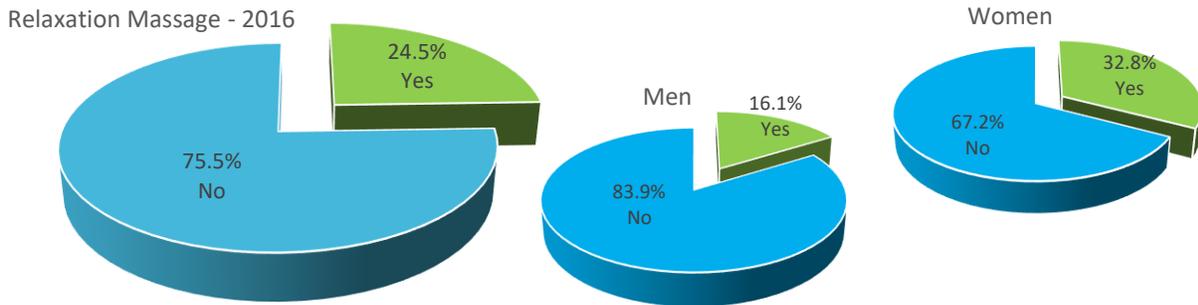
⁴ In 2016, 373 respondents indicated they received relaxation massage therapy services in the past twelve months resulting in a very robust subsample with a confidence interval of ± 5 percentage points at a 95% confidence level. 502 Albertans indicated they received therapeutic massage therapy services in the past twelve months resulting in a very robust subsample with a confidence interval of ± 4.4 percentage points at a 95% confidence level. In 2017, 425 respondents indicated they had received relaxation massage therapy services in the past twelve months resulting in a confidence interval of 4.75 percentage points at a 95% confidence level. 511 Albertans indicated they received therapeutic massage therapy services in the past twelve months resulting in a very robust subsample with a confidence interval of ± 4.4 percentage points at a 95% confidence level.

Findings

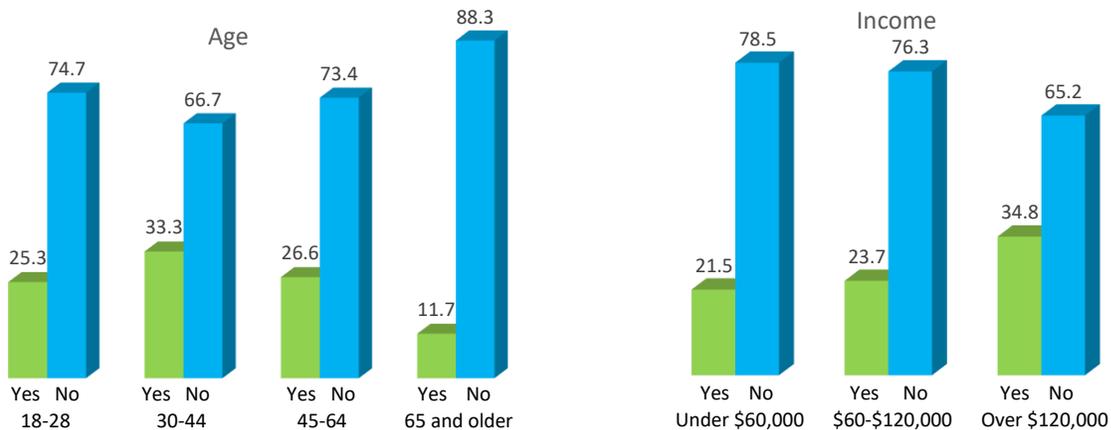
Relaxation Massage

Received relaxation massage therapy services in past twelve months

Nearly one-quarter of adult Albertans (24.5%) received relaxation massage services in 2016 (over 800,000 Albertans). Nearly three of ten adult Albertans (28.7%) received relaxation massage services in 2017 (over 900,000 Albertans). No significant differences were measured in the various regions of the province. Gender differences, however, are significant with women (32.8%) twice as likely as men (16.1%) to have received relaxation massage therapy services in the previous twelve months.

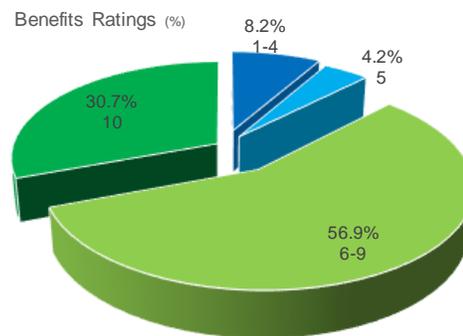


Upper income residents (34.8%) are more likely than middle (23.7%) and lower (21.5%) income residents to receive relaxation massage services. Seniors (11.7%) and those with the least amount of formal education (18.3%) were among the least likely to receive relaxation massage services. For a full breakdown of the demographic data please see Table 1 in Appendix B.



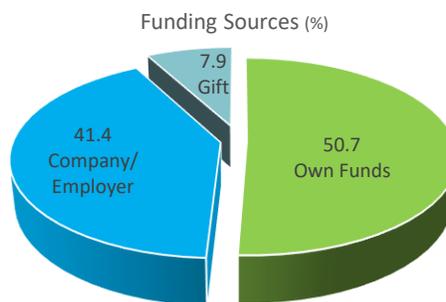
Evaluations of relaxation massage services received in past twelve months

Albertans who received a relaxation massage rated the service very positively, with an overall rating of 7.7 (mean) on a scale ranging from one (no benefit) to 10 (extremely beneficial). Nearly one-third (30.7%) gave the service a top score of 10, while less than one in ten (8.2%) rated the service lower than 5. Nearly nine in ten (87.6%) rated the service as better than 5. Women (8.1) evaluated the benefits of relaxation massage services higher than did men (7.1). No significant regional or other demographic differences are measured (see Tables 2 and 3 in Appendix B).



Funding source for relaxation massage services received in past twelve months

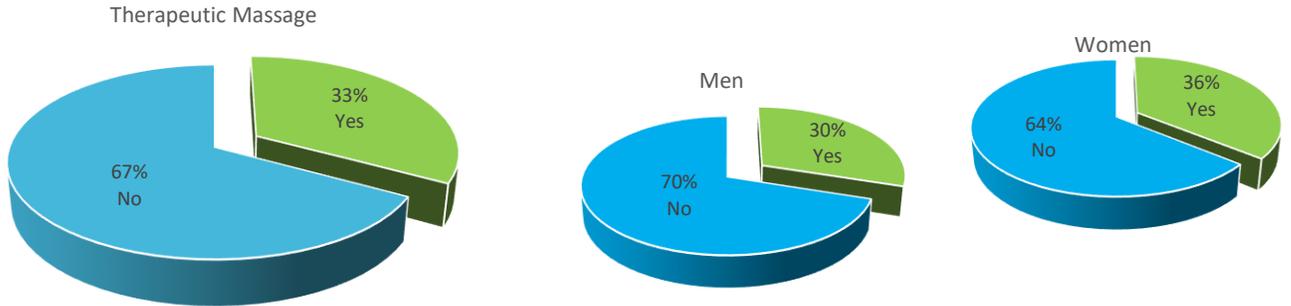
A majority of Albertans (50.7%) who received relaxation massage services in the past year paid for those services with their own funds. A significant plurality of Albertans (41.4%) had those services paid for by their employment benefits packages. Only 7.9% received these services as a gift from their family, friends, company or employer. No significant differences in funding sources are measured between regions or different demographic groups (see Table 4 in Appendix B).



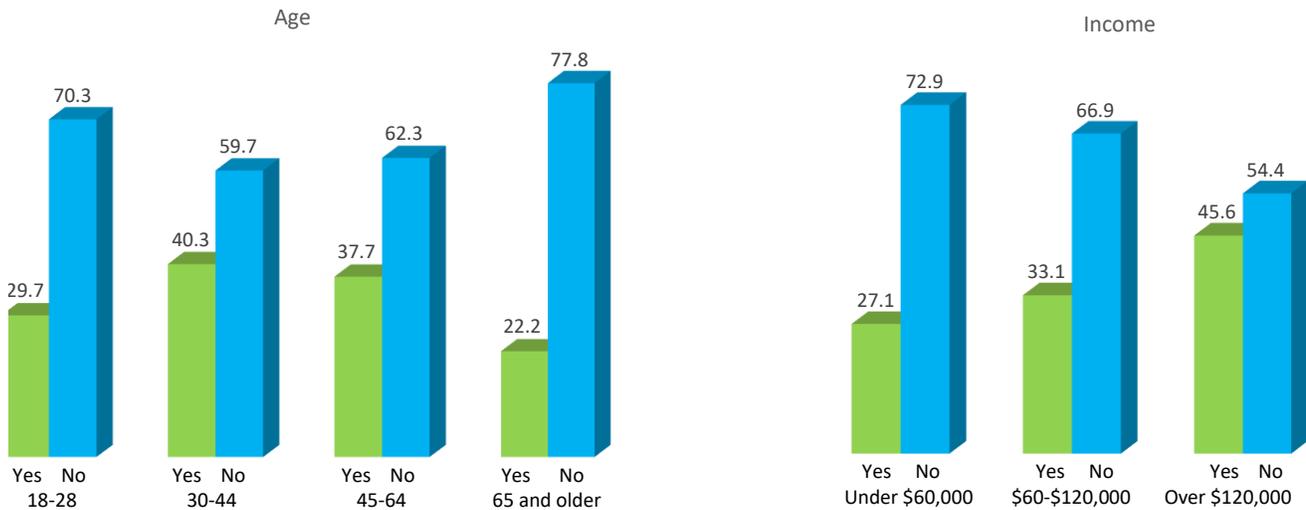
Therapeutic Massage

Received therapeutic massage services in past twelve months

Approximately one-third of Albertans (33.0%) received therapeutic massage services in 2016 while a similar proportion (34.5%) reported having received therapeutic massage treatment in 2017 (over one-million Albertans in both cases.) No significant regional variations are measures. Women (36.0%) are somewhat more likely to receive therapeutic massage services than are men (30.0%), but Alberta men are nearly twice as likely to receive therapeutic massage treatment as relaxation massage services (see Table 5 in Appendix B).

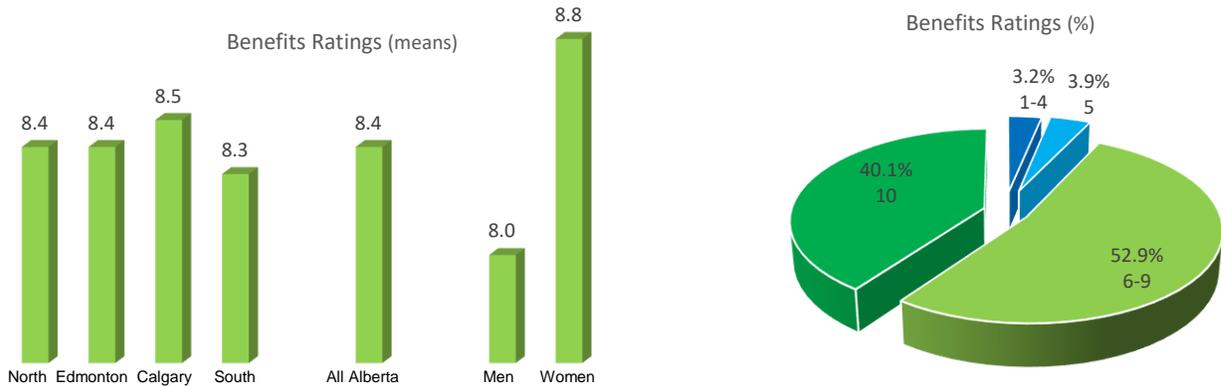


Middle aged Albertans are more likely to receive therapeutic massage services than are older (22.2%) or younger (29.7%) Albertans. Likelihood of receiving therapeutic massage services increases with income. Nearly half (45.6%) of upper income Albertans received therapeutic massage services in 2016 compared to one-third of middle income earners (33.1%) and only one-quarter (27.1%) of lower income earners.



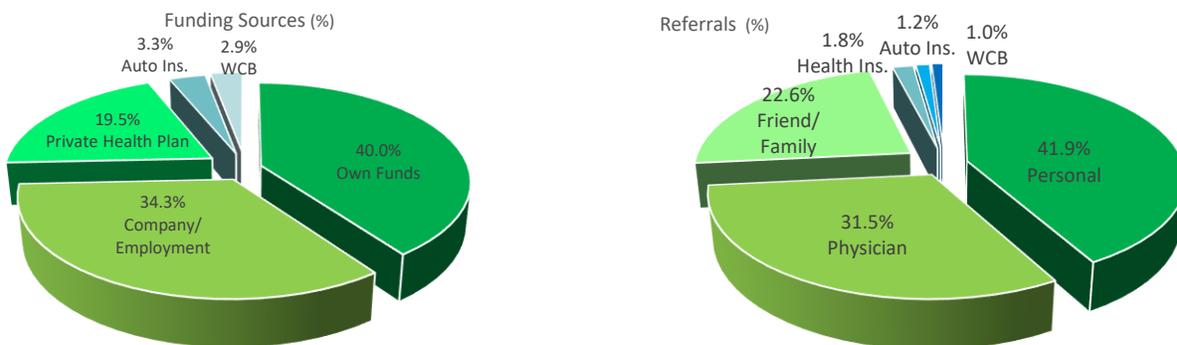
Evaluations of therapeutic massage services received in past 12 months

Albertans who received therapeutic massage services rated the service very positively, with an overall rating of 8.4 (mean) on a scale ranging from one (no benefit) to 10 (extremely beneficial). Two of every five (40.1%) gave the service a top score of 10, while less than one in twenty-five (3.2%) rated the service lower than 5. More than nine in ten (93.0%) rated the service as better than 5. Women (8.8) evaluated the benefits of the services higher than did men (8.0). No significant regional or other demographic differences are measured (see Tables 6 and 7 in Appendix B).



Funding source for therapeutic massage services in past 12 months

A significant plurality of Albertans (40.0%) who received therapeutic massage services in 2016 months paid for those services with their own funds. Over one-third (34.3%) had those services paid for through their employment benefits plans while a further one-fifth (19.5%) paid for the services by using their own private extended health plans. Very few Albertans had these services paid for by or by an auto insurance company (3.3%) or by the Alberta Workers Compensation Board (2.9%). Important regional and age differences are measured with southern (58.1%) Albertans (and to a lesser extent northern Albertans), and seniors (56.8%) much more likely to pay for therapeutic massage services from their own funds than are other Albertans (see Table 8 in Appendix B).

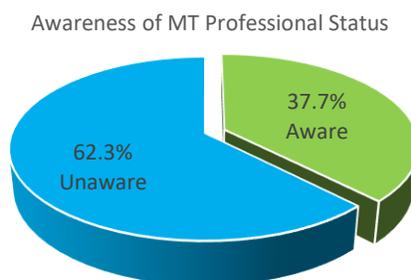


Referral and Information Sources for Therapeutic Massage Services

Of the approximately one-third of Albertans who received therapeutic massage services in 2016, the largest plurality (41.9%) chose therapeutic massage services because of personal research, opinion or preference. Nearly one-third of Alberta massage therapy clients were referred to their therapist by a physician (31.5%). Slightly more than one in five (22.6%) chose massage therapy based on the advice of a friend or family member (see Table 9 in Appendix B).

Awareness of Unregulated Professional Status of Massage Therapy Services in Alberta

In 2016, a substantial majority of Albertans (62.3%) were not aware of the unregulated professional status of the massage therapy industry in Alberta. 2017 levels of awareness were similar (64.0% unaware). Nearly two of every five Albertans claimed knowledge of the professional status of massage therapy prior to us alerting them to the lack of a professional college of massage therapists (37.7% in 2016 and 39.0% in 2017). No significant differences in awareness were measured between the regions of the province, or between demographic groups. The only significant differences in awareness were measured between those who had received therapeutic massage services in the past year, who were more aware than any other group (43.3% in 2016 and 45.7% in 2017), and those who did not receive therapeutic services in the past year (35.2% in 2016 and 35.6% in 2017). Interestingly, differences in awareness were not as great between those who received or did not receive relaxation massages, although those who had received relaxation massage services were slightly more aware of the regulatory status than were those who had not received services in the previous twelve months (see Table 10 in Appendix B).



Support for the Establishment of an Alberta College of Massage Therapists

It is clear from the data below, and the expanded tables in Appendix B, that the vast majority of Albertans support the establishment of an Alberta college of massage therapists (91.9% in 2016 and 90.8% in 2017). Most of those, and a clear majority of all Albertans are strongly supportive (57.4% in 2016 and 58.2% in 2017), with the remainder somewhat supportive (34.5% in 2016 and 32.5% in 2017). Very few Albertans are somewhat opposed (4.8% in 2016 and 5.6% in 2017) and fewer still are strongly opposed (3.3% in 2016 and 3.6% in 2017). Alberta women (94.5%) are more universally supportive than are their still very supportive male counterparts (89.1%). No significant regional differences in support levels were measured (see Table 11 in Appendix B).



Conclusions

Based upon these findings there is evidence to indicate that the massage therapy sector of the Alberta healthcare market is thriving in as much as a substantial proportion of Albertans are accessing and receiving good benefits from massage therapy treatments. For example, approximately one-quarter of adult Albertans have received relaxation massage while one-third have received a therapeutic massage treatment in the last 12 months. The vast majority of those who received a massage evaluate the benefits positively. Albertans are most likely to be paying for massage service out of their own funds, although company or employee benefit plans also pay for substantial proportions of massage services. Most significantly, the data confirm that the majority of Albertans do not know that massage therapy is not a regulated healthcare profession under the Alberta Healthcare Professions Act. The data further demonstrates Albertans' near universal support for massage therapy's inclusion as a regulated healthcare profession and the establishment of an Alberta college of massage therapists.

Appendix A – Questions

Thinking for a moment about massage therapy services in Alberta. Massage therapy is the manual manipulation of soft body tissues to enhance a person's health and well-being. While there are several types of massage, two general categories are *relaxation massage* and *therapeutic massage*. Relaxation Massage is most often practiced in settings like spas, wellness centers and resorts, Therapeutic Massage, also known as deep tissue, medical, or clinical massage, is practiced in settings like clinics, hospitals and chiropractic offices.

- Please tell me if you have received relaxation massage services in the past 12 months?
 - If yes, ask: On a scale that ranges from 1 to 10, with 1 being little or no benefit, and 10 being extremely beneficial, how much benefit did you receive from your last relaxation massage?
 - Please tell me who paid for this service?

- Have you received therapeutic massage treatment in the past 12 months?
 - If yes, ask: On a scale that ranges from 1 to 10, with 1 being little or no benefit, and 10 being extremely beneficial, how much benefit did you receive from your last relaxation massage?
 - Please tell me who paid for this service?
 - Please tell me what led you to choose massage therapy as a treatment?

Massage Therapy is not a regulated profession in Alberta because there is no governing association that enforces standards of practices, codes of ethics, and training requirements, as do the 30 Alberta health professional regulatory bodies such as the Alberta College of Physicians and Surgeons, the Alberta College of Dietitians, or the Alberta College of Physical Therapists.

- Please tell me if, before today, you were aware that massage therapy is not a regulate profession in Alberta?
- Please tell me whether you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose the establishment of an Alberta College of Massage Therapists that would govern the standards of practices, codes of ethics, and training requirements of massage therapists in Alberta.

Appendix B – Tabular Data

Table 1 – Demographic Profile of Relaxation Massage Clients (%)

| Region of Alberta | North | | Edmonton | | Calgary | | South | | Alberta | |
|-------------------|-------|------|----------|------|---------|------|-------|------|---------|------|
| | 2016 | 2017 | 2016 | 2017 | 2016 | 2017 | 2016 | 2017 | 2016 | 2017 |
| Yes | 25.3 | 25.9 | 21.7 | 28.7 | 24.5 | 29.0 | 24.6 | 30.6 | 24.5 | 28.7 |
| No | 74.7 | 74.1 | 78.3 | 71.3 | 75.5 | 71.0 | 75.4 | 69.4 | 75.5 | 71.3 |

| Gender* (2016) | Male | Female |
|----------------|------|--------|
| Yes | 16.1 | 32.8 |
| No | 83.9 | 67.2 |

| Income* (2016) | Under \$60,000 | \$60,000 to \$120,000 | Over \$120,000 |
|----------------|----------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| Yes | 21.5 | 23.7 | 34.8 |
| No | 78.5 | 76.3 | 65.2 |

| Religion (2016) | 2-3 times/month-more | Several times/year | Rarely-never |
|-----------------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| Yes | 19.8 | 30.6 | 23.9 |
| No | 80.2 | 69.4 | 76.1 |

| Education* (2016) | High School or less | Some Post-secondary | College-Tech-Trade | University Grad |
|-------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Yes | 18.3 | 26.3 | 23.4 | 27.7 |
| No | 81.7 | 73.7 | 76.6 | 72.3 |

| Age* (2016) | 18-29 | 30-44 | 45-64 | 65 and older |
|-------------|-------|-------|-------|--------------|
| Yes | 25.3 | 33.3 | 26.6 | 11.7 |
| No | 74.7 | 66.7 | 73.4 | 88.3 |

| Provincial Vote (2016) | NDP | Wildrose | PC | Liberal | Undecided |
|------------------------|------|----------|------|---------|-----------|
| Yes | 23.8 | 23.5 | 24.6 | 22.2 | 25.5 |
| No | 76.2 | 76.5 | 75.4 | 77.8 | 74.5 |

Notes: Due to rounding, proportions may not total exactly 100; * sig < 0.05

Table 2 – Client Ratings of Benefits of Relaxation Massage Services (2016)

| Rank | (%) | Rank | (%) | Summary Statistics | |
|---------------------------|------|------|------|--------------------|---------|
| 1 – no benefit | 3.9 | 1-4 | 8.2 | Mean | Median |
| 2 | 1.7 | 5 | 4.2 | 7.7 | 8.0 |
| 3 | 0.8 | 6-9 | 56.9 | Mode | Range |
| 4 | 1.8 | 10 | 30.7 | 10.0 | 1 to 10 |
| 5 | 4.2 | | | | |
| 6 | 9.5 | | | | |
| 7 | 14.1 | | | | |
| 8 | 26.0 | | | Standard Deviation | |
| 9 | 7.3 | | | 2.27 | |
| 10 – extremely beneficial | 30.7 | | | | |

Table 3 – Client Ratings of Benefits of Relaxation Massage Services by Demographic Group (means) (2016)

| | | | | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-----------------|---------|
| Area of province | North | Edmonton | Calgary | South | Alberta |
| | 7.8 | 8.0 | 7.5 | 7.7 | 7.7 |
| Gender* | Male | Female | All Albertans | | |
| | 7.1 | 8.1 | 7.7 | | |
| Income | Under \$60,000 | \$60-\$120,000 | Over \$120,000 | | |
| | 7.8 | 7.9 | 7.5 | | |
| Religious Participation | 1-3 per month/more | Several per year | Rarely/never | | |
| | 7.4 | 7.8 | 7.9 | | |
| Age | 18-29 | 30-44 | 45-64 | 65 and older | |
| | 8.2 | 7.7 | 7.7 | 7.2 | |
| Education | High School or Less | Some Post-secondary | College-Tech-Trade | University Grad | |
| | 7.4 | 8.2 | 7.9 | 7.5 | |

Range = 1 (no benefit) to 10 (extremely beneficial)

Table 4 – Funding Sources for Relaxation Massage Services by Demographic Group (%) (2016)

| Region of Alberta | North | Edmonton | Calgary | South | Alberta |
|-------------------|-------|----------|---------|-------|---------|
| Own funds | 51.2 | 48.8 | 45.9 | 56.4 | 50.7 |
| Company/employer | 38.4 | 45.1 | 48.0 | 34.7 | 41.4 |
| Gift | 10.5 | 6.1 | 6.1 | 8.9 | 7.9 |

| Gender | Male | Female |
|------------------|------|--------|
| Own funds | 53.0 | 49.6 |
| Company/employer | 40.0 | 42.1 |
| Gift | 7.0 | 8.3 |

| Income | Under \$60,000 | \$60,000 to \$120,000 | Over \$120,000 |
|------------------|----------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| Own funds | 58.2 | 44.6 | 48.2 |
| Company/employer | 29.7 | 46.4 | 47.3 |
| Gift | 12.1 | 8.9 | 4.5 |

| Religion | 2-3 times/month-more | Several times/year | Rarely-never |
|------------------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| Own funds | 50.7 | 42.7 | 54.0 |
| Company/employer | 38.8 | 48.3 | 39.1 |
| Gift | 10.4 | 9.0 | 6.9 |

| Education | High School or less | Some Post-secondary | College-Tech-Trade | University Grad |
|------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Own funds | 63.0 | 44.9 | 56.1 | 45.5 |
| Company/employer | 32.6 | 44.9 | 34.6 | 47.8 |
| Gift | 4.3 | 10.3 | 9.3 | 6.7 |

| Age | 18-29 | 30-44 | 45-64 | 65 and older |
|------------------|-------|-------|-------|--------------|
| Own funds | 50.6 | 48.2 | 48.1 | 66.7 |
| Company/employer | 40.5 | 44.6 | 43.7 | 28.2 |
| Gift | 8.9 | 7.1 | 8.1 | 5.1 |

Notes: Due to rounding, proportions may not total exactly 100; * sig < 0.05

Table 5 – Demographic Profile of Therapeutic Massage Clients (%)

| Region of Alberta | North | | Edmonton | | Calgary | | South | | Alberta | |
|-------------------|-------|------|----------|------|---------|------|-------|------|---------|------|
| | 2016 | 2017 | 2016 | 2017 | 2016 | 2017 | 2016 | 2017 | 2016 | 2017 |
| Yes | 35.8 | 33.0 | 27.3 | 36.0 | 35.9 | 34.2 | 33.2 | 34.8 | 33.0 | 34.5 |
| No | 64.2 | 67.0 | 72.7 | 64.0 | 64.1 | 65.8 | 66.8 | 65.2 | 67.0 | 65.5 |

| Gender* (2016) | Male | Female |
|----------------|------|--------|
| Yes | 30.0 | 36.0 |
| No | 70.0 | 64.0 |

| Income* (2016) | Under \$60,000 | \$60,000 to \$120,000 | Over \$120,000 |
|----------------|----------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| Yes | 27.1 | 33.1 | 45.6 |
| No | 72.9 | 66.9 | 54.4 |

| Religion (2016) | 2-3 times/month-more | Several times/year | Rarely-never |
|-----------------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| Yes | 28.6 | 38.7 | 33.3 |
| No | 71.4 | 61.3 | 66.7 |

| Education* (2016) | High School or less | Some Post-secondary | College-Tech-Trade | University Grad |
|-------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Yes | 22.7 | 33.0 | 36.2 | 36.2 |
| No | 77.3 | 67.0 | 63.8 | 63.8 |

| Age (2016) | 18-29 | 30-44 | 45-64 | 65 and older |
|------------|-------|-------|-------|--------------|
| Yes | 29.7 | 40.3 | 37.7 | 22.2 |
| No | 70.3 | 59.7 | 62.3 | 77.8 |

Notes: Due to rounding, proportions may not total exactly 100; * sig < 0.05

Table 6 – Client Ratings of Benefits of Therapeutic Massage Services (2016)

| Benefits of Therapeutic Massage Services | | | | Summary Statistics | |
|--|------|------|------|--------------------|---------|
| Rank | | | | | |
| 1 – no benefit | 1.8 | | | Mean | Median |
| 2 | 0.6 | Rank | (%) | 8.4 | 9.0 |
| 3 | 0.5 | 1-4 | 3.2 | | |
| 4 | 0.3 | 5 | 3.9 | Mode | Range |
| 5 | 3.9 | 6-9 | 52.9 | 10.0 | 1 to 10 |
| 6 | 4.3 | 10 | 40.1 | | |
| 7 | 10.8 | | | | |
| 8 | 25.0 | | | | |
| 9 | 12.8 | | | Standard Deviation | |
| 10 – extremely beneficial | 40.1 | | | 1.86 | |

Table 7 – Client Ratings of Benefits of Therapeutic Massage Services by Demographic Group (means) (2016)

Benefits of Therapeutic Massage Services (mean scores)

| Area of Province | North | Edmonton | Calgary | South | Alberta |
|-------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-----------------|---------|
| | 8.4 | 8.4 | 8.5 | 8.3 | 8.4 |
| Gender* | Male | Female | All Albertans | | |
| | 8.0 | 8.8 | 8.4 | | |
| Income | Under \$60,000 | \$60-\$120,000 | Over \$120,000 | | |
| | 8.3 | 8.3 | 8.8 | | |
| Religious Participation | 1-3 per month/more | Several per year | Rarely/never | | |
| | 8.3 | 8.8 | 8.3 | | |
| Age | 18-29 | 30-44 | 45-64 | 65 and older | |
| | 8.1 | 8.8 | 8.4 | 8.2 | |
| Education | High School or Less | Some Post-secondary | College-Tech-Trade | University Grad | |
| | 8.7 | 8.4 | 8.3 | 8.4 | |

Range = 1 (no benefit) to 10 (extremely beneficial)

Table 8 – Funding Sources for Therapeutic Massage Services (%) (2016)

| Region of Alberta* | North | Edmonton | Calgary | South | All Alberta |
|-------------------------|-------|----------|---------|-------|-------------|
| Own funds | 41.8 | 32.4 | 26.9 | 58.1 | 40.0 |
| Company/employer | 34.4 | 36.3 | 41.8 | 24.8 | 34.3 |
| Private extended health | 18.9 | 22.5 | 23.9 | 13.2 | 19.5 |
| Auto insurance | 4.1 | 5.9 | 3.0 | 0.8 | 3.3 |
| Alberta WCB | 0.8 | 2.9 | 4.5 | 3.1 | 2.9 |

| Gender | Male | Female |
|-------------------------|------|--------|
| Own funds | 39.0 | 40.6 |
| Company/employer | 39.0 | 30.6 |
| Private extended health | 16.1 | 22.1 |
| Auto insurance | 1.4 | 5.2 |
| Alberta WCB | 4.6 | 1.5 |

| Household Income | Under \$60,000 | \$60,000 to \$120,000 | Over \$120,000 |
|-------------------------|----------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| Own funds | 51.9 | 39.5 | 29.1 |
| Company/employer | 19.4 | 37.0 | 47.5 |
| Private extended health | 20.4 | 16.7 | 19.9 |
| Auto insurance | 2.8 | 4.9 | 2.8 |
| Alberta WCB | 5.6 | 1.9 | 0.7 |

| Education | High School or less | Some Post-secondary | College-Tech-Trade | University Grad |
|-------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Own funds | 43.1 | 46.9 | 42.6 | 32.6 |
| Company/employer | 29.3 | 21.9 | 35.8 | 41.3 |
| Private extended health | 19.0 | 20.8 | 18.5 | 19.8 |
| Auto insurance | 1.7 | 6.3 | 2.5 | 2.9 |
| Alberta WCB | 6.9 | 4.2 | 0.6 | 3.5 |

| Age* | 18-29 | 30-44 | 45-64 | 65 and older |
|-------------------------|-------|-------|-------|--------------|
| Own funds | 39.4 | 34.3 | 37.8 | 56.8 |
| Company/employer | 34.0 | 37.3 | 35.6 | 25.7 |
| Private extended health | 19.1 | 18.7 | 21.8 | 16.2 |
| Auto insurance | 6.4 | 3.7 | 2.7 | 0.0 |
| Alberta WCB | 1.1 | 6.0 | 2.1 | 1.4 |

Notes: Due to rounding, proportions may not total exactly 100; * sig < 0.05

Table 9 – Referrals and Information Sources for Therapeutic Massage Therapy (%) (2016)

| Region* | North | Edmonton | Calgary | South | All Alberta |
|------------------------|-------|----------|---------|-------|-------------|
| Personal decision | 37.8 | 41.5 | 50.4 | 37.8 | 41.9 |
| Physician referral | 38.6 | 31.1 | 25.2 | 31.1 | 31.5 |
| Friend/family referral | 23.6 | 20.8 | 17.6 | 28.1 | 22.6 |
| Health ins. referral | 0.0 | 2.8 | 3.1 | 1.5 | 1.8 |
| Auto ins. referral | 0.0 | 2.8 | 2.3 | 0.0 | 1.2 |
| WCB referral | 0.0 | 0.9 | 1.5 | 1.5 | 1.0 |

| Gender | Male | Female |
|------------------------|------|--------|
| Personal decision | 38.7 | 44.4 |
| Physician referral | 28.4 | 33.9 |
| Friend/family referral | 28.9 | 17.7 |
| Health ins. referral | 0.4 | 2.9 |
| Auto ins. referral | 1.8 | 0.7 |
| WCB referral | 1.8 | 0.4 |

| Household Income | Under \$60,000 | \$60,000 to \$120,000 | Over \$120,000 |
|------------------------|----------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| Personal decision | 37.3 | 38.8 | 47.2 |
| Physician referral | 33.1 | 35.6 | 27.8 |
| Friend/family referral | 23.7 | 23.8 | 20.8 |
| Health ins. referral | 0.0 | 1.9 | 2.1 |
| Auto ins. referral | 1.7 | 0.0 | 2.1 |
| WCB referral | 4.2 | 0.0 | 0.0 |

| Education | High School or less | Some Post-secondary | College-Tech-Trade | University Grad |
|------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Personal decision | 36.9 | 29.7 | 47.9 | 44.8 |
| Physician referral | 26.2 | 42.6 | 30.9 | 27.9 |
| Friend/family referral | 27.7 | 24.8 | 18.2 | 23.8 |
| Health ins. referral | 4.6 | 2.0 | 0.6 | 1.7 |
| Auto ins. referral | 1.5 | 0.0 | 2.4 | 0.6 |
| WCB referral | 3.1 | 1.0 | 0.0 | 1.2 |

| Age | 18-29 | 30-44 | 45-64 | 65 and older |
|------------------------|-------|-------|-------|--------------|
| Personal decision | 35.4 | 42.2 | 42.7 | 48.0 |
| Physician referral | 28.3 | 34.1 | 33.3 | 26.7 |
| Friend/family referral | 32.3 | 18.5 | 20.3 | 22.7 |
| Health ins. referral | 2.0 | 0.7 | 1.6 | 2.7 |
| Auto ins. referral | 2.0 | 2.2 | 1.0 | 0.0 |
| WCB referral | 0.0 | 2.2 | 1.0 | 0.0 |

Notes: Due to rounding, proportions may not total exactly 100; * sig < 0.05

Table 10 – Awareness of Unregulated Professional Status of Massage Therapy in Alberta (%)

| Region of Alberta | North | | Edmonton | | Calgary | | South | | Alberta | |
|-------------------|-------|------|----------|------|---------|------|-------|------|---------|------|
| | 2016 | 2017 | 2016 | 2017 | 2016 | 2017 | 2016 | 2017 | 2016 | 2017 |
| Yes | 39.7 | 38.4 | 38.6 | 40.1 | 39.7 | 40.6 | 33.3 | 37.0 | 37.7 | 39.0 |
| No | 60.3 | 61.6 | 61.4 | 59.9 | 60.3 | 59.4 | 66.7 | 63.0 | 62.3 | 61.0 |

| Massage Services Received (past 12 months) (2016) | Relaxation Massage | | Therapeutic Massage* | |
|---|--------------------|------|----------------------|------|
| | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| Yes | 41.3 | 36.7 | 43.3 | 35.2 |
| No | 58.7 | 63.3 | 56.7 | 64.8 |

| Gender (2016) | Male | Female |
|---------------|------|--------|
| Yes | 38.1 | 37.3 |
| No | 61.9 | 62.7 |

| Income (2016) | Under \$60,000 | \$60,000 to \$120,000 | Over \$120,000 |
|---------------|----------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| Yes | 35.3 | 38.5 | 42.0 |
| No | 64.7 | 61.5 | 58.0 |

| Religion (2016) | 2-3 times/month-more | Several times/year | Rarely-never |
|-----------------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| Yes | 39.9 | 35.8 | 36.9 |
| No | 60.1 | 64.2 | 63.1 |

| Education (2016)* | High School or less | Some Post-secondary | College-Tech-Trade | University Grad |
|-------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Yes | 30.2 | 35.7 | 38.9 | 41.9 |
| No | 69.8 | 64.3 | 61.1 | 58.1 |

| Age (2016) | 18-29 | 30-44 | 45-64 | 65 and older |
|------------|-------|-------|-------|--------------|
| Yes | 28.9 | 34.0 | 43.5 | 41.4 |
| No | 71.1 | 66.0 | 56.5 | 58.6 |

Notes: Due to rounding, proportions may not total exactly 100; * sig < 0.05

Table 11 – Support for Establishment of an Alberta College of Massage Therapists

| Region of Alberta | North | | Edmonton | | Calgary | | South | | Alberta | |
|-------------------|-------|------|----------|------|---------|------|-------|------|---------|------|
| | 2016 | 2017 | 2016 | 2017 | 2016 | 2017 | 2016 | 2017 | 2016 | 2017 |
| Yes | 95.2 | 90.5 | 92.4 | 90.9 | 91.1 | 89.8 | 89.2 | 91.6 | 91.9 | 90.8 |
| No | 4.8 | 9.5 | 7.6 | 9.1 | 8.9 | 10.2 | 10.8 | 8.4 | 8.1 | 9.2 |

| Massage Services Received (2016) | Relaxation Massage | | Therapeutic Massage | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|------|---------------------|------|
| | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| Support | 92.5 | 91.6 | 92.8 | 91.4 |
| Oppose | 7.5 | 8.4 | 7.2 | 8.6 |

| Gender* (2016) | Male | Female |
|----------------|------|--------|
| Support | 89.1 | 94.5 |
| Oppose | 10.9 | 5.5 |

| Income (2016) | Under \$60,000 | \$60,000 to \$120,000 | Over \$120,000 |
|---------------|----------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| Support | 89.7 | 91.5 | 93.1 |
| Oppose | 10.3 | 8.5 | 6.9 |

| Education (2016) | High School or less | Some Post-secondary | College-Tech-Trade | University Grad |
|------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Support | 90.1 | 93.7 | 91.0 | 92.7 |
| Oppose | 9.9 | 6.3 | 9.0 | 7.3 |

| Age (2016) | 18-29 | 30-44 | 45-64 | 65 and older |
|------------|-------|-------|-------|--------------|
| Support | 91.1 | 93.6 | 92.4 | 90.1 |
| Oppose | 8.9 | 6.4 | 7.6 | 9.9 |

| Provincial Vote (2016) | NDP | Wildrose | PC | Liberal | Undecided |
|------------------------|------|----------|------|---------|-----------|
| Support | 95.3 | 90.3 | 90.3 | 92.7 | 95.9 |
| Oppose | 4.7 | 9.7 | 9.7 | 7.3 | 4.1 |

Notes: Due to rounding, proportions may not total exactly 100; * sig < 0.05