

Thank you Senators for allowing me to speak to you today. I am Mary Elizabeth Le Blanc, Legislative Director, Oklahoma Chapter of the American Massage Therapy Association.

Oklahoma is one of five unregulated states. The other four are Wyoming, Kansas, Minnesota and Vermont. Regulation provides protection for consumers, communities and massage professionals, by requiring minimal education and demonstration of proficiency.

In the 1700's American surgeons and physicians guided highly intuitive individuals to provide soft tissue manipulation along with joint and limb mobilization to assist patients with recovery from surgery or prolonged illness.

The 1850's brought Swedish Medical Gymnasts to American. They received training in a 2-year program requiring Anatomy and physiology, hygiene (health), pathology, movement prescription and clinical work. While Pehr Henrik Ling is credited with creating Swedish Massage, it was actually Johann Mezger who outlined the categories of massage techniques, effleurage, petrissage, friction and tapotement. With vibration being added later. Ling's adherence to proper education, proficiency and clinical measurement are what still guide the massage field today.

In 1916 Ohio was the first state to regulate massage therapy as a limited extension of medicine. By 1959 five more states followed. The next three decades saw only seven more states regulate. Through the 1990's seventeen more states and Washington D.C. regulated. From 2001-2014 eighteen more states regulated.

Please help us by taking the lead for the last five states to gain regulation of massage therapy. Thank you!

Our hope is that once all states are regulated the industry can focus on creating educational standards nationally. Allowing for easy relocation of massage therapist in our ever fluid world.