

A Call to Action

To: Board of Directors, American Massage Therapy Association
From: Concerned AMTA Members
Date: July 21, 2007
Re: Leadership crisis at NCBTMB

Within the past month, there have been two press releases issued to the massage therapy profession by recent members of the NCBTMB Board of Directors (of this group, four of the five also served as officers). These documents provide detailed information on a serious leadership crisis occurring within that organization. There have been an alarming number of violations of NCBTMB Bylaws, Policies and Procedures by currently serving Board members. In particular, it is clear that Board Chair Donna Feeley has been at the center of efforts to consolidate power and advance a personal agenda over the mission of public protection that has been upheld since NCBTMB was founded.

Efforts to bring accountability through NCBTMB's internal procedures have been subverted because the subjects of the inquiries were in control of the very process itself. Unfortunately, such conflicts of interest have become the order of the day. A Board whose members vote to extend their own terms of office by a year cannot be trusted to act in the public interest. As there is no other agency with procedural authority to oversee the activities of the NCBTMB Board of Directors, what exists here is a governance emergency that requires direct and corrective action.

AMTA's relationship with NCBTMB goes back to its very origins, having provided leadership, financial and logistical support over the years. Recently, when the Federation of State Massage Therapy Boards emerged onto the scene, the AMTA Board acted swiftly and decisively to protect the interests of NCBTMB from the *potential* threat of a competing Federation exam. Now, there is an *actual* threat to the existence of NCBTMB and its certification program – and it is coming from its own leaders. Since NCBTMB has a central role in the ongoing operations of the massage therapy profession, this situation can (and will) affect all stakeholder groups.

AMTA is the only organization in the field that can exert the kind of influence needed to restore accountability and integrity to NCBTMB. In real terms, *the house is on fire*. As it has done in the past, it is time once again for the AMTA Board to take action in protection of the NCBTMB mission.

Therefore, the AMTA Board of Directors is respectfully requested to adopt the following resolution:

RESOLUTION:

The AMTA Board of Directors expresses its deep concern over the failure of the National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage & Bodywork to conduct the business of the organization in full compliance with its Bylaws, Policies and Procedures. Recent actions of the NCBTMB Board of Directors have compromised the integrity of the organization, and have jeopardized the certification program. This has a direct effect on AMTA Members and the AMTA Council of Schools, along with the massage therapy and bodywork profession in general.

In light of these actions, BE IT RESOLVED that the AMTA Board of Directors calls for: 1) the immediate resignation of NCBTMB Chair Donna Feeley for numerous violations of the NCBTMB Bylaws, Policies and Procedures; and 2) the immediate resignation of Chair-Elect Neal Delaporta and Director Monica Reno for past unethical behavior while serving as a Director and thereafter. Furthermore, the AMTA Board calls for the reappointment of past NCBTMB Directors Bob Lehnberg, Katherine Burnett and Cospir Scafidi, and that Bob Lehnberg, who previously held the position of Chair-Elect, be named to serve in the office of Chair for the remainder of Feeley's term.

The AMTA Board of Directors believes these corrective steps are necessary to restore effective leadership to NCBTMB, which will better enable the organization to serve its ongoing mission of public protection.