



JOHNSTONE'S JOURNAL is published monthly, and designed to provide topical information of interest not only to plan administrators, but to all employees who enjoy coverage under the benefit plan. Feel free to make copies, and use as a payroll staffer.

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## Massage Therapy Don't assume every massage is a covered benefit

### Verify your therapist's accreditation

Massage therapy may be beneficial in attaining relief from a wide-range of health ailments such as stress and anxiety, headaches and backaches, muscle strains, and more. Because of its positive effects, massage therapy is a standard benefit included under most extended health care (EHC) plans. However, only massage therapy performed by an accredited therapist is eligible for reimbursement, and in some cases, it requires a referral from a medical doctor.

Before assuming that your EHC plan will reimburse you for massage therapy, check your booklet to determine if it is eligible under your plan, if there are any limits, and if you need a doctor's referral.

### Finding an eligible therapist

Your best choice when looking for a massage provider is a Registered Massage Therapist (RMT) or a massage therapist who is recognized by their provincial governing organization.

In British Columbia, Ontario, and Newfoundland and Labrador, massage therapists are regulated and licensed by:

[Registered Massage Therapists' Association of Ontario](#), or [College of Massage Therapists of Ontario](#)

[Massage Therapists' Association of British Columbia](#) or [College of Massage Therapists of British Columbia](#)

[Newfoundland and Labrador Massage Therapists' Association](#) or [College of Massage Therapists of Newfoundland and Labrador](#)

Other provincial governments do not regulate massage therapists, and therefore, therapists have a varying amount of training and competence. If you live in one of the following provinces or territories, your provincial association can help you locate a therapist who has been professionally trained through an acknowledged program:

[Massage Therapists Association of Alberta](#)

[Massage Therapist Association of Saskatchewan](#)

[Massage Therapy Association of Manitoba](#)

[Professional Massage Therapists Association of Quebec](#)

[New Brunswick Massotherapy Association](#)

[Massage Therapists' Association of Nova Scotia](#)

[Prince Edward Island Massage Therapists' Association](#)

[North West Territories Massage Therapy Association](#)  
(which also serves Yukon and Nunavut)

### Important requirement changes in Alberta

In Alberta, several insurers have recently tightened their massage therapy criteria in an effort to bring the standard in line with the provinces that regulate it. These insurers will only reimburse massage therapy claims from therapists who meet their eligibility requirement, which is 2,200 hours of formal education or a 2,200 competency equivalency (equal to a two-year diploma). The clinic must also be registered with the insurer. Massage therapists in Alberta were notified of this change last year and have been asked to communicate this information to their patients. **Therapists who don't qualify will need to upgrade their education and training and claims for these therapists will no longer be covered.** Most insurers implemented this change effective May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013, except Blue Cross, who delayed it to August 1<sup>st</sup>.

### Seeking reimbursement for massage

To submit a claim to your group benefits insurer, you will need to include the receipt from your massage therapist. The receipt must include their name, a detailed description of the services performed, their address and telephone number, and their RMT or license number.

If you're not sure whether your massage therapist meets your insurer's criteria for eligible massage therapy claims payment, contact them directly, or call us at Johnstone's Benefits.