



## **Prescribed or Recreational Substances Policy**

**Effective date:** January 15, 2023

**Amended:**

### **About this policy**

The purpose of the policy is to outline expectations for Registered Massage Therapists (RMTs) when encountering clients using prescribed or recreational substances, whether legal or not. Clients must be fully informed and able to consent to treatment, and RMTs must obtain informed consent before assessing and/or treating clients.

### **Our responsibilities to members**

- MTANS will share this policy with members, and it will monitor the changing climate, particularly with respect to cannabis topical products, and review this policy as appropriate.
- MTANS will use this policy to assess whether appropriate standards of practice and professional responsibilities have been maintained. Failure to abide by this policy may result in disciplinary actions by the association.

### **Member responsibilities to clients**

- RMTs must use their professional judgement to determine if the client can understand the potential benefits and risks of massage therapy treatment, and whether the client's perception of pain or pressure levels, or what occurred during the treatment itself, could be impacted.
- An RMT should not assess or treat a client who is impaired by a substance that is affecting the client's ability to provide informed consent, regardless of the source of the impairment.

- If an RMT suspects a client may be under the influence of cannabis (recreational or prescription), alcohol, or any other substance that impairs their ability to provide appropriate consent, or if it is unclear whether the patient is able to consent to treatment, their treatment should be postponed until the client is in an appropriate state to consent and obtain treatment.
- At no point is it acceptable for an RMT to provide treatment when they themselves are under the influence of a substance that impairs their judgement, critical thinking, or motor skills. This includes but is not limited to the use of: alcohol, THC, or prescription/non-prescription drugs that alters their ability to treat their client safely.
- RMTs are not permitted to recommend the use of cannabis or any other medical products that are prescribed or used as supplementation. If a client has questions about cannabis, an RMT should refer the client to a primary health care provider (such as a physician or nurse practitioner) who can assess the client's needs and determine a course of action. It's not within the Scope of Practice of Massage Therapy to provide information or advice about how cannabis may affect a person's health. RMTs are advised to direct patients with these types of questions to a physician or other health professional whose scope of practice allows for the discussion or recommendation of cannabis.
- The use of cannabis products within a massage therapy treatment is also strictly prohibited, including the application of oil and/or CBD, even when provided by the client, as there is insufficient information available regarding the risks associated with the use of topical products. Offering or selling cannabis products (including topical products) in a massage therapy practice is also prohibited.

### **Relevant documents**

- *Cannabis Act* (Nova Scotia)
- Code of Ethics
- Scope of Practice Guide
- Standard of Practice: Consent