

Government Relations report-1/22/23

Our team continues to be involved with issues that affect the Massage Therapy profession. On 1/18/23, Val Smothers, LMT, current KBLMT board chair, Rebecca Hartsough (Babbage Cofounders-AMTA lobbyist) and Ann Boone, LMT, AMTA-KY GR chair attended a press conference on 1/18/23 with Attorney General Daniel Cameron and Heather Wagers, executive director of the "Office of Trafficking and Abuse Prevention and Prosecution (TAPP) to launch the H.O.P.E. initiative to combat human trafficking in Kentucky. The initiative pushes back against human trafficking by mobilizing communities and landlords to identify and shutter illicit massage businesses (IMBs) that may be enabling human trafficking."¹ AMTA-KY is honored to be a part of this along with General Cameron's office, the FBI, KBLMT and law enforcement from Lexington-Fayette, Hardin, Laurel and Bullitt counties. Other counties will be added over time.

IMBs masquerading as licensed reputable massage businesses closed by TAPP since October 2022 include Bullitt, Fayette, Hardin and Laurel counties. Over half the landlords contacted have terminated or declined to renew their leases. ¹ TAPP's efforts have also included educating those in their communities how to recognize when human trafficking is taking place. For further information go to:

[YourEyesSaveLives.ky.gov/HOPEinitiative](https://www.youreyesavealives.com/HOPEinitiative).

I was encouraged to know that there is also assistance for victims of human trafficking, especially after these businesses have been shut down and these victims need support more than ever. Natalie's Sisters began serving sexually exploited/sex trafficked women in Lexington's adult entertainment clubs in 2000, and added the street ministry in 2012. It is one of a few organizations who provide substance abuse and mental health counseling as well as job and life skills to help them regain some semblance of normalcy. For more information, please visit their website at: nataliessisters.org

We've also been monitoring HB67, which was first introduced in the 2021 legislative session. It would allow patients/clients up to 20 visits a year for pain management to be paid by their insurance companies with a referral from a prescribing physician for Massage Therapy, Chiropractic and Acupuncture services, among others. Please see the bill text here:

https://apps.legislature.ky.gov/recorddocuments/bill/23RS/hb67/orig_bill.pdf

When this bill was originally introduced in 2021, the AMTA-KY GR team was involved with getting HB79 passed. It has been reintroduced in the current session, AMTA would like to make promoting this bill a priority. It will most likely need to be re-introduced in the 2024 session due to 2023 being a short session and having a GOP majority, both of those making the likelihood of it passing in the 2023 session very low. Cherylnn Stevenson (D) is the current bill sponsor. We will be reaching out to her and other lawmakers from across the aisle to support this bill in 2024.

Finally, many Kentucky LMTs have been waiting patiently for trainings to be approved by KBLMT in order for us to use Microcurrent and PEMF devices under our scope of practice. Due to miscommunication and many board changes, submission and approval of these trainings has been delayed. We are back on track and hope to move forward with getting these trainings approved in order to start using them with our clients. We will be posting updates as they come available.

As always, if you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at GRchair@amtaky.org.

In health,
Ann E. Boone, LMT, BCTMB
AMTA-KY Government Relations chair

1 Kentucky.gov, Frankfort Kentucky, 1/18/23