

NEWSLETTER



Progress in Customer Service and Licensing Enhancements

Improving customer service and modernizing the licensing process remain top priorities for the Board. Over the past two quarters, measurable progress has been made in several areas:

- Service Improvements
- More consistent communication with applicants and licensees
- Improved responsiveness to inquiries and case status requests
- Enhanced internal workflows to support timely issue resolution

A Message from Board Leadership

Over the past six months, the Arizona State Board of Massage Therapy has continued its commitment to public protection, regulatory excellence, and enhanced service to licensees and applicants. Through leadership transitions, strategic staffing adjustments, and process improvements, the Board has taken meaningful steps to modernize operations and improve the overall licensing experience while maintaining rigorous professional standards. This first quarter update highlights recent organizational changes, customer service advancements, and the Board's forward-looking initiatives designed to strengthen the reputation and visibility of the massage therapy profession in Arizona.



**CHECK OUT OUR NEW
WEBSITE**
massagetherapy.az.gov

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LATEST UPDATES

Looking Ahead

As the Board moves into the next quarter, priorities will continue to focus on:

- Ongoing licensing system improvements
- Continued staff development and operational efficiency
- Strengthened stakeholder engagement
- Maintaining high standards of public protection and professional accountability

The Arizona State Board of Massage Therapy remains committed to serving the public and licensees with integrity, transparency, and excellence.

Leadership and Staff Updates

The Board has experienced several internal transitions over the past six months that have strengthened organizational capacity and operational continuity. These changes were undertaken with a focus on stability, institutional knowledge, and service efficiency.

Key developments include:

- Strategic leadership alignment to support long-term regulatory goals
- Staffing enhancements focused on licensing, compliance, and customer support
- Cross-training initiatives to improve response times and reduce processing delays
- Continued emphasis on professionalism, consistency, and transparency in stakeholder interactions

These changes position the Board to better meet the evolving needs of licensees, applicants, and the public.

Licensing process enhancements include:

- Streamlined application review procedures
- Greater clarity in application requirements and documentation
- Ongoing evaluation of systems and processes to reduce administrative burden while maintaining public safety standards

These efforts reflect the Board's commitment to balancing regulatory oversight with efficiency, clarity, and fairness.

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Staff Spotlight: Tobi Zavala, Executive Director



Tobi Zavala serves as Executive Director of the Arizona State Board of Massage Therapy, bringing extensive experience in regulatory leadership and public protection. Ms. Zavala still serves as Executive Director of the Arizona Board of Behavioral Health Examiners, where she continues to provide significant operational and cultural improvements within a complex regulatory environment.

Her background includes:

- Oversight of large-scale licensing and enforcement operations
- Implementation of process improvements to increase efficiency and accountability
- Leadership in stakeholder engagement across regulated professions
- A strong focus on public trust, transparency, and regulatory integrity

During her tenure in behavioral health regulation, Ms. Zavala has been recognized for strengthening organizational effectiveness, improving inter-board collaboration, and advancing professional standards while maintaining a licensee-focused service approach.

As Executive Director of the Massage Therapy Board, her leadership is centered on:

- Modernizing regulatory operations
 - Enhancing communication and public confidence
 - Supporting licensees through clear, consistent regulatory guidance
- Ensuring the Board remains responsive, fair, and forward-thinking

Improving Optics for the Massage Therapy Industry

The Board recognizes the importance of professional credibility and public perception for the massage therapy industry. Under current leadership, initiatives are underway to strengthen how the profession is viewed by the public, healthcare partners, and policymakers.

Key goals include:

- Reinforcing the legitimacy and professionalism of licensed massage therapists
- Promoting ethical practice and clear professional standards
- Supporting public education around the role of licensed massage therapy in health and wellness
- Ensuring regulatory actions align with both public protection and industry integrity

Through thoughtful regulation, consistent enforcement, and proactive communication, the Board aims to elevate confidence in the profession while supporting qualified practitioners across Arizona.

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Understanding and Complying with Board Rules and Statutes: A Professional's Responsibility

Holding a massage therapy license in Arizona carries both privilege and responsibility. The Arizona State Board of Massage Therapy's statutes and administrative rules exist to protect the public, uphold professional standards, and preserve the integrity of the massage therapy profession. Licensees are expected to know, understand, and comply with these requirements at all times, regardless of practice setting.

Failure to follow Board rules can result in disciplinary action, even when violations are unintentional. For this reason, **staying informed is not optional**—it is a core component of professional practice.

This education moment provided by your Board Chairperson, Angela Reiter, provides an overview of several commonly overlooked rules and statutory obligations that all license holders should review and understand.



Why Knowledge of Board Laws and Rules Matters

- Board statutes and rules define the legal scope and boundaries of massage therapy practice
 - Establish minimum standards for ethical and professional conduct
 - Protect licensees by clarifying what is permitted and prohibited
 - Safeguard public trust in licensed professionals
 - Ignorance of the law does not excuse noncompliance.
- Licensees are responsible for remaining current with statutes, administrative rules, and Board guidance, including updates or changes over time.



Commonly Overlooked Requirements

1. Displaying Your License Number on All Advertisements

Arizona law requires licensed massage therapists to include their license number on all advertisements, regardless of format. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Websites and booking platforms
- Social media profiles and posts
- Business cards, flyers, and brochures
- Online directories and promotional emails

This requirement promotes transparency, allows consumers to verify licensure, and helps distinguish licensed professionals from unlicensed individuals. Omission of a license number—even unintentionally—may constitute a violation.

Best Practice: Periodically audit all marketing materials to ensure your license number is clearly displayed and accurate.

2. Scope of Practice and the Use of Class II Medical Devices

Massage therapists must practice strictly within the scope of practice defined by statute and rule. A frequent area of confusion involves the use of Class II medical devices.

Key considerations include:

- Not all therapeutic tools or devices are within the massage therapy scope of practice
- Use of medical devices may require additional credentials, supervision, or licensure outside massage therapy
- Representing oneself as providing medical or diagnostic treatment beyond statutory authority may constitute unlicensed practice

Licensees are responsible for verifying whether a modality, device, or technique is legally permitted before incorporating it into practice. This would include equipment designed for nerve stimulation and body sculpting to name a couple.

Best Practice: When in doubt, consult Board statutes, rules, or official guidance before offering new services or technologies.

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3. Obligation to Report Unlicensed or Out-of-Scope Activity

Licensed massage therapists have a professional and legal obligation to help protect the public. This includes reporting:

- Individuals practicing massage therapy without a valid license
- Licensed individuals engaging in activities outside the lawful scope of massage therapy
- Practices that pose a risk to public safety or undermine professional standards

Reporting is not punitive in nature; it is a mechanism to ensure accountability, public protection, and fairness within the profession.

Best Practice: If you become aware of potentially unlawful activity, contact the Board for guidance on reporting procedures.

4. Staying Informed and Proactive

Compliance is an ongoing responsibility. Licensees are encouraged to:

- Regularly review Board statutes and administrative rules
- Monitor Board communications, newsletters, and updates
- Seek clarification before expanding services or altering practice models
- View compliance as part of professional ethics, not merely a regulatory obligation

By understanding and adhering to Board requirements, licensees contribute to a stronger profession, enhanced public confidence, and a safer marketplace for massage therapy services.

Final Reminder

Your license represents professional credibility and public trust. Knowing and following Board rules protects not only your livelihood, but also the reputation of massage therapy as a respected, regulated profession in Arizona.

Angela Reiter, MT-12913
Board Chairperson

