



Our Partnership with the Federation of Therapeutic Massage, Bodywork & Somatic Practice Organizations (FedMBS)

In 2010, the Biodynamic Craniosacral Therapy Association of North America (BCTA/NA) applied for membership in the Federation of Therapeutic Massage, Bodywork & Somatic Practice Organizations (FedMBS) and in 2011 BCTA/NA became the tenth member. BCTA/NA participates in the Federation because it deeply values the benefits from collegial communication with the many diverse member organizations. We also participate to stay abreast of legislative developments that could affect the right of its members to practice, and to assure that appropriate language is incorporated in massage and bodywork laws and regulations.

The Chair of the BCTA's Judicial & Legislative Review Committee and a BCTA/NA Board member are the BCTA/NA's representatives to the FedMBS. They attend the annual in-person meeting (late March/early April) with the 18 other member organization representatives. The BCTA/NA representatives also attend the monthly conference call of the FedMBS's Joint Government Relations Committee (JGRC), where current legislative & regulatory issues are discussed and strategic language & actions are formed to ensure our right to practice within fair regulation.
<http://www.federationmbs.org/index.html>

History of Federation

(passed on by Michael Murphy, RISI)

The FedMBS was created out of a process that began with a request from Susan Rosen of the Washington chapter of the AMTA and Suzanne Carlson of the Oregon Chapter of AMTA. They realized that the profession of MT would benefit from external independent certification to evaluate competency of its professionals. In response to this the AMTA started the National Certification Board of Therapeutic Massage & Bodywork (NCBTMB). The National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA) which governs how a certification board must run, requires that the certification board within a trade organization, have an independent board of directors to oversee the exam certification process. Therefore, the AMTA created the NCB with its own organizational status and board of directors.

In the MT and bodywork world there was significant opposition to NCBTMB. Robert Calvert of Massage Magazine started Head, Heart and Hands meetings (apx. 38 years ago) out of concerns

about what NCBTMB was doing. Through those meetings, many players from diverse disciplines came together and met one another for the first time. These meetings ultimately led the AMTA to expand the NCB. With expansion there was a flurry of conversation including Carl Dubitsky and Steve Shenkman: What are areas where we can speak with one voice: legislative, marketing. Since as mentioned the NCB had specific rules governing its activities, the founders of NCBTMB realized they needed yet another separate forum to have political, marketing, and leadership conversations. With this awareness and interest, the initial Federation of Therapeutic Massage & Bodywork Organizations (FTMBO) was founded with the same five organizations that had begun the NCB. These initial five organizations are now called the: American Organization of Bodywork Therapies of Asia (AOBTA), Rolf Institute of Structural Integration (RISI), US Trager Association (USTA), American Polarity Therapy Association (APTA), and the American Massage Therapy Association (AMTA).

Then Jeff Maitland an original member of the committee that formed the NCB (and first to represent RISI on FTMBO) started talking to the Feldenkrais Guild of North America (FGNA), who said “we fit, but not really.” The Federation started understanding that professions outside MT and bodywork could add to the conversation, and so added somatic practice to name, becoming the Federation of Therapeutic Massage, Bodywork, & Somatic Practice Organizations (FedMBS). With more unique professional practices and professional needs, over time, it got harder to do joint projects and speak as one voice. This led the Fed MBS to settle on a process of consensus (see handout).

FedMBS continues to function as a vehicle for communication between member organizations. The Joint Government Relations Committee (JGRC) communicates in an ongoing way about legislative issues. Members commit to: listening to and respecting other member organizations needs and interests, and to not undermine each other. Sometimes this is a challenge if there is a big issue for one organization that is different for the others. For some actions, one organization will sit out, other times all participate in a cooperative effort. Sometimes organizations with more similar professional needs and interests cooperate on specific issues.

The FedMBS used to meet twice yearly, now we meet once, most often in the center of the country (Boulder and Chicago). Every 4-6 weeks the JGRC meets via phone call, to discuss and share info regarding states and themes related to government regulation. The JGRC is a standing committee: Intense, detailed, and very important. It tends to bring higher thinkers out of the member organizations. Please continue to send your best and your brightest. This legislative business is a dauntingly complex task.

Each FedMBS organization works independently taking responsibility for their positions and communications. The JGRC does not have one spokesperson to communicate on behalf of each organization. Participation and follow through from each organization on behalf of their own concerns is necessary. FedMBS members function as a group through mutual respect and openness to working together for the benefit of unique needs within the collective interests to support all our professions.

The FedMBS has no bylaws, board of directors, phone #, email or office. There is no 'there there'. (Murphy says: I LOVE THE GERTRUDE STEIN REFERENCE!!) We have created a website to offer information to the general public on what and who the FedMBS is and how we function. The website also includes a legislative packet which can be used as a guide by people doing coalition work within their states for licensure.

Meeting Notes are for internal member organizational use only. It is agreed that each organization can distribute notes to their Board only. Notes do not go to their general membership and are not to be published in a public forum, because information from the notes can easily be taken out of context and/or misinterpreted. On occasion, specific information from the notes has been, and could be, used as a basis for a more public report of the meeting highlights.