# Inspiring excellence in massage therapy education



## Canadian Massage Therapy Council for Accreditation

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# MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Kathrina Loeffler Executive Director



lain Robertson Board Chair

2020 was a year of many challenges, innovations, and successes at CMTCA, with the COVID-19 pandemic affecting almost every aspect of our work.

The stakeholders we interact with most frequently, the education programs we accredit, faced significant hurdles this year as they worked to redesign many of their educational activities for online learning, and adopted new health and safety protocols to allow their students to complete their labs, practical classes, and practical clinic and outreach experience requirements. CMTCA's immediate focus was to support programs in these adaptations, to ensure graduates entering the workforce are ready to provide professional, quality health services.

The pandemic propelled CMTCA to design a virtual site visit process, using videoconferencing to complete the campus tours and surveyor's conversations with students, faculty, and other stakeholders. This enabled programs to continue to achieve their accreditation goals, even though in-person survey team visits were not possible.

Last year, CMTCA resumed providing accreditation services for massage therapy education programs in British Columbia. This led to significant growth in the number of applications, preliminary accreditation reviews, and accreditation reviews for the year, a very positive sign of progress in the growth of the accreditation program.

### Financial Highlights

Financially, CMTCA expenses continue to align well with revenue from its funding organizations under current multi-year funding agreements with regulators and education programs in British Columbia, Ontario, New Brunswick, and Newfoundland and Labrador. CMTCA's financial sustainability continues to be strengthened by steady growth in the number of education programs and provinces which support accreditation.

### Operating Highlights

COVID-19 Pandemic

CMTCA staff, Board members and surveyors have had to adapt considerably in this fiscal year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. From moving to working from home, to designing



and implementing site visits virtually, and holding the annual Board retreat online, it has indeed been a time of unprecedented learning and change.

#### Governance

At our April 2020 Annual General Meeting, CMTCA bid farewell to Board member Denise Armstrong. Denise made tremendous contributions to CMTCA with her depth of knowledge of massage therapy practice and education. Thank you, Denise, for all of your contributions to CMTCA and to massage therapy education accreditation.

CMTCA was honoured to introduce two new Board members in 2020; Gabriel Flamminio, and Andrew Lewarne, both Registered Massage Therapists. Gabriel is a massage therapy educator who provides leadership to the massage therapy program at Fanshawe College in London, ON. He also continues to practice clinically, and attended the 2016 Paralympic Games as part of Team Canada's Wheelchair Basketball medical staff. Andrew Lewarne has extensive experience in clinical practice and massage therapy education. He has served on the Board of Directors of the Registered Massage Therapists' Association of Ontario (RMTAO) and as an Examinations Officer for the College of Massage Therapists' of Ontario (CMTO). More recently he assumed the role of Executive Director of the RMTAO for five years and now works as the vice president of the Sutherland-Chan Professional Clinics in charge of Leadership and Franchise Development. CMTCA staff and Board members are excited to be working with Gabriel and Andrew. We know their experience and knowledge will be an asset to CMTCA.

#### Looking ahead

As CMTCA continues to grow as an accreditation organization, supporting more and more education programs across Canada, we look forward to 2021 when we will refresh our strategic plan and look toward revising and refining our accreditation standards to meet the needs of the future.

In this turbulent year, we would be remiss if we did not mention CMTCA's commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion both within our organization and in the massage therapy education programs we accredit. Our accreditation standards have always included an ethical commitment to integrity and equity in teaching and policies, and to diverse and equitable resources and services.

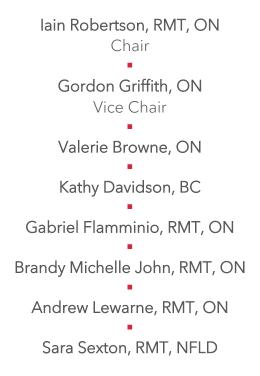
CMTCA acknowledges that being open to recognizing and correcting bias and discrimination of all kinds, including racism and ableism is essential to ensuring that massage therapy education programs provide a comprehensive foundation for future practitioners to promote and enrich the health of all Canadians.

lain Robertson, Board Chair

Kathrina Loeffler, Executive Director

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## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2020**



Highlights of the CMTCA Board of Director's activities in 2020 include:

- Reviewing Preliminary Accreditation and site visit recommendation reports and issuing accreditation decisions
- Granting Preliminary Accreditation to 23 education programs at 13 institutions
- Accrediting five education programs and three institutions
- Directing and supporting stakeholder engagement, resulting in a number of virtual meetings and presentations with education programs, regulatory colleges and associations across the country.

# FROM CONCEPT TO REALITY:

2017-2020 Strategic Plan Accomplishments

## Independence



### goals completed

Bylaws revised
Policy Governance model implemented
Independent operation

## Sustainability



As of December 2020:
69 applications
25 Programs with Preliminary Accreditation
9 Accredited Programs

## Accreditation

92%

of all Criteria rated MET during site visits completed to date

## WHO WE ARE

We develop
accreditation standards
for massage therapy
education and accredit
massage therapy
education programs in
Canada.

Achieving CMTCA
accreditation is a
tangible representation
of a program's
commitment to quality,
safety, and ongoing
improvement.

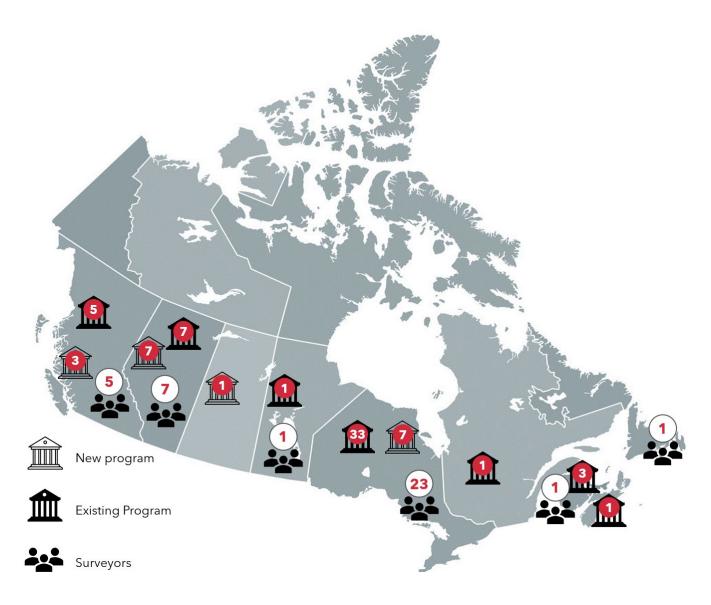
# THE ACCREDITATION PROCESS BY THE NUMBERS

### Applications and Surveyors

In 2020, CMTCA received two new applications and conducted three site visits (one was completed virtually). Six programs (at three institutions) achieved accreditation this year. 69 programs now have applications with CMTCA, 51 are existing programs and 18 are new programs.

There are 38 surveyors currently available for CMTCA accreditation reviews. There are also 12 certified advisors available for consultation (certified advisors are trained by CMTCA but operate independently).

Applications and Surveyors by province (as of December 2020)



### Preliminary Accreditation results

In 2020, CMTCA completed 13 Preliminary Accreditation Reviews, representing 24 massage therapy education programs. Of the 24 programs reviewed this year, 23 programs were granted Preliminary Accreditation.

### Accredited Programs

We extend our sincere congratulations to the staff and students of the following newly accredited programs on their stellar achievement:

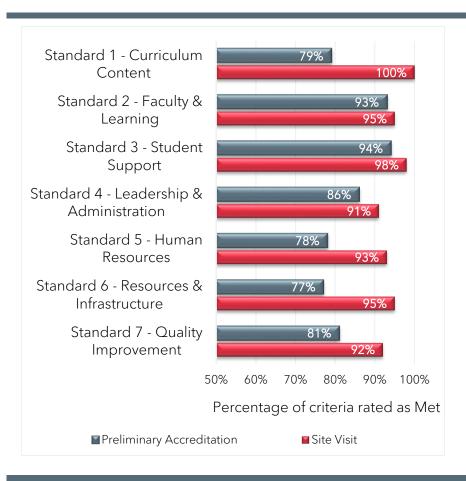
- Canadian College of Massage & Hydrotherapy Halifax Site 20-month, 16-month, and 3-year blended Massage Therapy Programs (Nova Scotia)
- Lethbridge College Massage Therapy Program (Alberta)
- Langara College Registered Massage Therapy Program (British Columbia)

Accredited and Preliminary Accreditation -Granted programs (as of December 2020)



## ANALYSIS OF ACCREDITATION RESULTS

Monitoring and analyzing accreditation results helps CMTCA identify trends and issues and look for ways to continue to improve our support to education programs.





Our analysis shows that programs improve in Standard 1 criteria compliance by an average of 21% between Preliminary Accreditation and Site Visit.

This is a key standard: it addresses

Curriculum Content.

Over 27 Preliminary Accreditation reviews thus far, and only

4%

of criteria were rated Unmet!

Programs show a strong commitment and ability to meet the accreditation standards.



GG

Feedback from the preliminary accreditation review by a panel of experts served as a stepping stone to improving our College's policies, infrastructure, and processes to support students to become upstanding massage therapy practitioners.

99

Accredited program in Ontario



## SUPPORTING EDUCATION PROGRAMS DURING COVID-19 - OPERATING HIGHLIGHTS

During a time of uncertainty and the need to focus on the health and safety of all Canadians, CMTCA was available to offer support and guidance related to the accreditation process. CMTCA worked closely with education programs that were seeking or maintaining accreditation to support them as they adjusted their program delivery, and their accreditation review plans due to COVID-19.

### **Change Reporting**

CMTCA acknowledged the significant limitations on program operations imposed by COVID-19 protocols and shut-downs. CMTCA communicated frequently with education programs and other stakeholders via email <a href="newsletter">newsletter</a> updates. Beginning with a message on March 20, 2020, CMTCA provided programs with information and support around maintaining compliance with the accreditation standards, while allowing flexibility during the health crisis. CMTCA commended programs in making temporary changes with regard to how curricula and student services were delivered to limit the potential for disease transmission and to follow provincial and federal guidelines related to COVID-19. In normal circumstances, education programs making such extensive changes would have necessitated significant reporting to CMTCA to provide evidence of continued compliance with the accreditation Standards. Following discussion with the Board, other accrediting organizations, and stakeholders; reporting requirements were lifted temporarily to ease the workload for education programs wherever possible.

Programs were asked to keep internal records of the temporary adjustments that they made to their programs during COVID-19, and to document the impact of those changes wherever possible, so that when site visits resume, surveyors can assess the actions taken to address the health crisis and restrictions and ensure that graduates have the necessary skills to take the regulatory exams and be ready to practice as professional, competent health care providers. Programs were only asked to communicate significant changes should they become permanent.

#### **Extensions to Accreditation Timelines**

Completing an accreditation self-assessment or site visit takes a lot of dedication and time on behalf of education program staff. For programs that were unable to proceed with their preliminary accreditation self-assessment or site visit during these trying times, CMTCA provided flexibility by extending their accreditation timelines. Their reviews will be completed in the coming months, as the restrictions and uncertainty of the pandemic eases.

#### Virtual Site Visits

To support programs wishing to move forward in their accreditation journey, CMTCA created a virtual site visit process, made available to programs while pandemic-related restrictions prevented in-person visits by survey teams. A virtual site review gave the opportunity to achieve a 1-year or 3-year accreditation decision, without the need to wait for an in-person site visit; while still ensuring a thorough review of a program's compliance with the accreditation standards. Survey teams were expanded to include an extra CMTCA staff member to assist with the logistical burden of coordinating all of the videoconference tours, meetings and conversations needed to conduct the Tracer method in a virtual environment.

Under normal circumstances, in addition to the interviews they conduct, the Survey team would request and review documentation and evidence during their time on campus. For virtual site visits, programs were asked to select and submit documentation and evidence in advance to support their compliance with the criteria. In addition, during the site visit, the survey team was able to request documentation, as is typical for any site visit. The site visit fee was reduced, to reflect the lower costs. Programs completing a virtual site visit are eligible for a one or three-year accreditation award. Five-year accreditation decisions may be awarded only after an in-person site visit (and only following a program's second site visit).

### Supportive Resources - Sharing Ideas

Programs were also encouraged to make use of the forums on the CMTCAu platform (CMTCA's Learning Management System available to all applicants) to share ideas and support. CMTCA provided more frequent email newsletters with information about changes to accreditation requirements, virtual site visit availability, and answers to

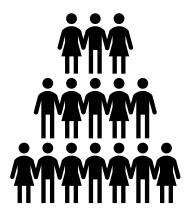
Frequently Asked Questions.

During the initial months of the pandemic, CMTCA Executive Director, Kathrina Loeffler, also met on a regular basis with accrediting organizations for other professions, as a member of the Association of Accrediting Agencies of Canada, and with massage therapy regulators. The opportunity to share challenges, ideas, and solutions to the current situation with other stakeholders and experts has been invaluable. Working with these colleagues has ensured that the CMTCA approach to reporting requirements and virtual site reviews is aligned with other Canadian education accreditation organizations.



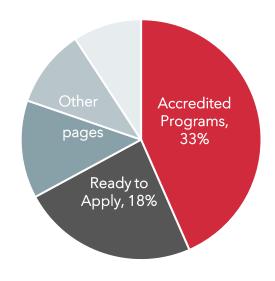
## **CMTCA COMMUNICATIONS**

In 2021, CMTCA will launch a new and redesigned website. CMTCA has grown since the planning committee first began work in 2013, and the audience for CMTCA's website has evolved as well. It was time for a website refresh, to improve the content and user experience. The current CMTCA website traffic and user patterns were analyzed as part of the verification of the new design concept. Here are some of the findings.



8,176

Unique visits to the CMTCA website last year



The most **popular page** (other than the Home page): the list of **programs Accredited by CMTCA** 

HOW DID VISITORS FIND cmtca.ca?



Organic Search (Google etc.)

56%



Direct (bookmarks, typing the website)

18%



Referrals from other sites:

18%

In 2020, six email newsletters were sent to CMTCA's over 300 subscribers.

The topics included congratulations to accredited programs, information about COVID-19 and accreditation, and answers to Frequently Asked Questions

## CMTCA AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

CMTCA's audited financial statements are published at:

CMTCA Audited Financial Statements 2020



## LOOKING AHEAD

In 2021, we look forward to sharing our updated strategic plan, and beginning work on the exciting initiatives that it contains. We look forward to working with our new and continuing Board members, under new leadership from Gordon Griffiths and Gabriel Flamminio. 2021 will also bring collaborations with our funding stakeholders to update and renew our multi-year funding agreements in the provinces of B.C., Ontario, New Brunswick, and Newfoundland and Labrador.

We are looking forward to a return to in-person work, but for now we will be continuing to work, meet and provide support and site visits virtually as needed while COVID-19 continues to impact the communities where we work.

We are looking ahead to begin planning for a new round of surveyor training, and we expect to complete an accreditation standards revision process over the next two years. Standards revision is a key milestone for an accreditation organization, a chance to update our standards to match changes in the education and healthcare environment, and to consult with stakeholders and analyze accreditation metrics and feedback. Our post-accreditation review analysis of compliance with each of the criteria in our standards, and of feedback surveys from education program participants and surveyors, are part of our process of continuous quality improvement and will be essential to informing this process.

The CMTCA Board and staff extend our sincere thanks and appreciation to everyone who was involved in helping us grow in 2020, and we look forward to continued success in 2021!

### WE'RE HERE TO HELP

CMTCA encourages anyone who is interested in accreditation, quality improvement, or raising the profile of massage therapy education and massage therapy in general to <u>contact us</u> at any time.

We support our education programs and surveyors in many ways, including interpreting the standards and helping them navigate every step of accreditation journey. We take these roles very seriously and they are a key part of what we do every day.

Let's talk quality improvement!