

Policy Statement 4

Release of records

Policy

Massage therapists have a responsibility to respond promptly to requests for health information from clients or third parties. This information may be required to facilitate the client's care or settle employment or legal issues relating to the illness or injury.

Guidelines

When a request is made for information from a client's file, the massage therapist should ensure the proper procedures are followed:

- A signed consent (from the client or the client's representative) authorizing release of the information to the particular individual, is in the client's file. The consent form should be dated within the last 6 months.
- If no consent exists or if the date on which it was signed is outdated, the requesting party should be contacted and advised that a new consent will be required.
- Once consent has been obtained, the requested copy, summary, report, or medical/legal report should be prepared.
- A fee that reflects the cost of materials used, the time required to prepare the material, and the cost of sending it to the requester should be established. The massage therapist may request payment of the fee prior to providing the documentation.

Example:

A massage therapist, John, is relocating out of province and sells his practice to a chiropractor who plans to operate a multi-disciplinary clinic. The new owner plans to hire a massage therapist, but this person will not have started work by the time that John moves.

John has spoken with all the current clients and has helped them to make arrangements for on-going care. He has agreed to provide a copy of their client record to their new massage therapist.

Part of the agreement between John and the new owner includes a provision for the storage and maintenance of all of the past client records. The new owner will store the documents and agrees to provide copies to John and the clients or their agents, as necessary. John has written to all of the former clients advising them of the sale of the clinic, and how they can access their client records should they need them in the future.

In this way, John has provided for the on-going care of active clients, transfer of their records to the provider of their choice, storage of the clinic's client files, and future access to the information for himself and his clients as necessary.