



# **DEMAND FOR MASSAGE THERAPY**

*Demand*

## **PUBLIC INTEREST IN AND USE OF MASSAGE CONTINUES TO INCREASE**

- The cost of healthcare in the United States is estimated to reach \$2.2 trillion by 2008 from 1.6 trillion in 1998.<sup>1</sup>
- Consumers spend between \$4 and \$6 billion annually on visits to massage therapists — approximately 27% of the \$21.2 billion spent on unconventional healthcare in 1997.<sup>2</sup>
- Consumers visit massage therapists 114 million times each year.<sup>2</sup>
  - About 18% of the 629 million annual visits to alternative healthcare providers.<sup>2</sup>
- There are numerous indications that massage therapy is gaining acceptance and growing.
  - Of the types of alternative care explored, people say they would be most likely to use massage therapy (80%), vitamin therapy (80%), herbal therapy (75%), and chiropractic (73%).<sup>3</sup>
  - 54% of primary care physicians and family practitioners say they would encourage their patients to pursue massage therapy as a complement to medical treatment.<sup>4</sup>
  - HMO members using complementary and alternative medicine services rate their satisfaction with HMO-defined acupuncture, naturopathic, and massage benefits as high.<sup>5</sup>
  - 78 of this country's 125 medical schools — including Harvard, Yale, Stanford, Georgetown, and Johns Hopkins — now offer courses in alternative medicine ... up from 27 in 1995.<sup>6</sup>
  - A total of 27% of the adult U.S. population reports having massages in the past 5 years, 15% in the past 12 months.<sup>7</sup>
  - Massage has become increasingly popular among consumers over 45, being used by about a third of this age group versus a quarter of those younger. Massage is also popular among consumers 25 to 34.<sup>8</sup>
  - Those who seek massage therapy from a trained professional average 7 visits per year.<sup>3</sup>
  - Many companies (e.g. G.E., Goldman Sachs, Young & Rubicam, Motorola, and American Airlines) are inviting massage therapists on-site as an employment perk and as a means of reducing stress and absenteeism.<sup>8</sup>
  - Among organization benefits managers, 8% report that massage is an employee benefit.<sup>9</sup>
  - The number of massage therapists is between 160,000 and 220,000, including students.<sup>10</sup>
  - American Massage Therapy Association's membership increased more than fourfold in the 1990s to over 41,000 members.<sup>11</sup>



# TRENDS IN MASSAGE THERAPY



## MASSAGE THERAPY

### Massage Has Become Mainstream

- American adults are having many more massages than they did even a year ago, pointing to a trend that therapeutic massage is increasingly accepted and appreciated.<sup>7</sup>
- Consumers visit massage therapists 114 million times each year.<sup>2</sup>
- Massage is sought out by large numbers of people in all age brackets.<sup>7</sup>
  - 18-24 (22%)
  - 25-34 (31%)
  - 35-44 (25%)
  - 45-54 (22%)
  - 55-64 (19%)
  - Over 65 (9%)
- Massage is equally popular among men and women in all regions of the country and across most incomes.<sup>7</sup>
- Massage is popular among people with some college education (31%) and people with only a high school education (16%), but more popular among college graduates (35%).<sup>7</sup>
- People earning more than \$50,000 are having massages most often (34%).<sup>7</sup>
- The massage explosion can be attributed partly to the growing population of tired, aging, not-quite-as-limber-as-they-once-were baby boomers, partly to an increased awareness of the effects of stress and of the physiological benefits of “pressing the flesh.”<sup>9</sup>
- More working-class professionals are using massage therapy to relieve stress and treat sore muscles. Massage therapists that once served only elite professionals or athletes see a wider range of clientele.<sup>9</sup>
- Doctors are prescribing massage to help patients manage stress and pain.<sup>12</sup>
- Among emergency room patients, 31% report that they have used massage in the past for painful conditions.<sup>13</sup>

### Sports Massage Boosts Athletic Performance

- Many athletes are extolling the benefits of massage.<sup>14</sup>
- More sports teams have begun to hire massage therapists.<sup>15</sup>
- Many prominent professional athletes rely on massage to help them recover from injuries and muscle soreness.<sup>16</sup>

## **MASSAGE THERAPY** *CONTINUED*

### **On-site Massage Offered in the Workplace**

- The Touch Research Institute at the University of Miami (TRI) has documented the positive effects of massage therapy on job performance and stress reduction. The research indicates that a basic 15-minute chair massage, provided twice weekly, results in decreased job stress and significant increase in productivity.<sup>17</sup>
- A growing number of businesses and organizations offer massage in the workplace, including the U.S. Department of Justice.<sup>18</sup>
- At Boeing and Reebok, headaches, back strain, and fatigue have all fallen since the companies started bringing in massage therapists.<sup>12</sup>
- More than 80 companies, including many Fortune 500 companies, are using massage therapy to counter such ills as musculoskeletal problems, stress and poor ergonomic design of furniture.<sup>19</sup>
- By including 15 minutes of free massage therapy once each week, the Calvert Group, an investment firm in Bethesda, MD, reduced its turnover rate to 5% in an industry where the norm is 20%.<sup>20</sup>

## **TRENDS IN COMPLEMENTARY HEALTHCARE**



### **COMPLEMENTARY AND ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE (CAM)**

#### **Public Interest in and Use of CAM Continues to Increase**

- Studies show that patients make more visits each year to alternative care practitioners (629 million times per year<sup>2</sup>) than to primary care physicians (386 million<sup>2</sup>), and most of them pay out of their own pockets for the care they receive.<sup>21</sup>
- More than four in ten adults in the United States (42%) have used some type of alternative healthcare in the past year and many report a likelihood of future usage. Nearly one-half of adults in the United States (45%) say they would be willing to pay more each month to have access to alternative care, and most people (67%) believe the availability of alternative care is an important factor when choosing a health plan.<sup>3</sup>
- A survey by the Office of Alternative Medicine found that over half of the conventional physicians in the United States have recommended or tried alternative medicine.<sup>22</sup>
- Studies show that better-educated, affluent individuals seek out and use alternative medicine more than the less-educated and poor.<sup>1</sup>



## SOURCES

# Sources

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