

2015 ANNUAL REPORT



natural health practitioners of canada
praticiens de la santé naturelle du canada

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About the NHPC

The Natural Health Practitioners of Canada (NHPC) is the largest holistic health organization across Canada, representing over 6,000 members. The NHPC advocates for fair recognition of over 60 holistic health practices to the public, governments, and the insurance industry.

Established in 1988, the NHPC is proud to represent members with high levels of competency, professionalism, and ethics. It has a strong tradition of professional standards and is committed to maintaining these standards for its members.

NHPC practitioners are recognized for:

- quality training
- high ethical standards
- commitment to safety
- dedication to client health

As more and more Canadians are exploring various health management options, they are seeking complementary and alternative treatments. The NHPC is committed to raising public awareness of the benefits of holistic health in this ever-changing landscape of health and wellness.

The NHPC believes that treatment of the whole body in a non-invasive manner can create the balance of mind and body that results in optimum health. With hundreds — and even thousands — of years behind many of these treatments, their benefits have been recognized over time.



Board President and Executive Director's Report

As Canada's largest country-wide holistic health organization, the NHPC continues to provide valuable services to its members through the efforts of 21 staff and 10 Board members.

Of significant importance in the NHPC's progress throughout 2015 were the many relationships that were built and strengthened with members, other holistic health associations, insurance companies, and government representatives. These relationships opened doors to a wide range of discussions and initiatives.

During 2015, giving voice to NHPC members on regulation was a priority. To gauge member support for regulation, the NHPC met with members throughout the year, conducted surveys (in Alberta, jointly with the Massage Therapist Association of Alberta (MTAA) and the Remedial Massage Therapists Association (RMTA)), and determined that the majority of massage therapists in each province support regulation. With direction from the membership, the NHPC and other massage therapy associations in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba began discussions on how to move forward toward regulation.

The NHPC is committed to working collaboratively with other associations while keeping the needs of NHPC members as a priority. In addition to work on regulation, meetings with insurance companies continued, as the NHPC advocated for member recognition.

The NHPC's public profile increased significantly due to participation in seven tradeshows and health fundraising events in different parts of the country. The purpose of these events was to raise the profile of the Association and engage the public in the various health practices the NHPC recognizes. Public interest was high, thanks to the many NHPC practitioners who volunteered their services for demonstrations. In addition, various television and print media contacted the NHPC for coverage of the Association, holistic health practices in general, and regulation.

In 2015, there were many opportunities for members to interact with each other and to strengthen their skill-set through continuing education. The NHPC held two conferences in response to member requests. They were held in Winnipeg, Manitoba, and Edmonton, Alberta. Other in-person education offerings and webinars were successful in addressing member needs.

Fall Connections Cafes were well-attended in 19 locations across Canada. Members were able to voice their ideas and meet new colleagues, the NHPC Board of Directors, and staff. These meetings are of significant importance to the NHPC for planning future activities and advocacy initiatives, based on members' feedback.



Kim MacEachran, Board President



Kelly Sloan, Executive Director

Online membership renewals increased significantly in 2015, as a result of user-friendly access and the benefit of immediately accessible documents. As well, several new companies joined the NHPC member discount provider program, providing discounts to NHPC members on services and products, with even more are planned for 2016.

The NHPC's complaints resolution process continued offering a respectful way to address public concerns regarding practitioner misconduct, with assessments and investigations carried out in accordance with NHPC Bylaws.

The Practice Management staff continued to provide resources, information, and support to members, the public, and the insurance industry on a variety of questions related to the provision of holistic health services. Frequent questions were related to business operations, ethical matters, and scope of practice. This service remains unique to the NHPC.

The NHPC holds communications with members as a top priority. The bi-monthly delivery of the electronic newsletter, NHPC News, continued to keep members up-to-date on industry and Association news. The NHPC's social media presence continued to grow on Twitter and both the public Facebook page and the

members-only group, NHPC Speak Easy. Because of these successes, plans to introduce blogs in 2016 are already in place. In addition, the design of a new, more user-friendly website was completed and work began on implementation at the end of the 2015.

The NHPC Board enjoyed the opportunity to meet members and the public throughout the year at the many events, including demonstrations at trade-shows. They met quarterly to review NHPC operations, to consider amendments to the Bylaws, and to review the direction of the Association. The Board welcomed three new members: Helen Aikens (Nova Scotia), Amanda Roth (Alberta), and Tanya Wagner (Saskatchewan). The Board and NHPC staff demonstrate a passion for holistic health daily. They all bring an impressive array of skills and experience to the NHPC, and they are tireless in their efforts to bring the benefits of holistic health to the many new and existing relationships. The successes of 2015 have provided a strong base for continuing activity for members in 2016.



Registrar and Practice Management

Registrar

To join the NHPC holistic health practitioner community, an applicant must:

- meet the eligibility criteria set by the NHPC Board of Directors
- be approved by the Registrar

Being of Good Character and Reputation

An NHPC application includes submission of a Police Information Check. If there is information that requires disclosure, the Registrar conducts an interview to assess the risk in relation to an applicant's suitability to be in the profession and as a member of the NHPC.

Being in "Good Standing"

Members who are in active practice hold a Regular Membership and are required to be compliant with the Continued Competency Program (CCP). The Association monitors compliance with audits of randomly selected members. Each audit has proven successful with over 90% of audited members being compliant. This high success rate is due to the support provided to members as they complete the compliance requirements.

Members must maintain their membership in "Good Standing" in order to be afforded the rights and privileges of NHPC membership. "Good Standing" of membership includes payment of dues, fees, and assessments in accordance with NHPC Bylaws. Members are notified of their renewal by email, NHPC News, and mail 60 days prior to their expiry date. If a complete renewal, including payment, is not received on or before the expiry date, the membership is no longer in "Good Standing". If a renewal is not completed in accordance to the Bylaws, the member will be terminated. After

termination, the former member must re-apply as a new member. They are then subject to the eligibility and application requirements at that time and will be assigned a new membership number.

At the 2015 Annual General Meeting (AGM), Bylaw amendments that addressed articles on termination and re-application were presented and approved by members. These amendments have provided clarity and greater understanding for both members and the NHPC.

Practice Management

The Practice Management Advisor (PMA) is a member resource for the everyday inquiries and ethical matters related to holistic health practices. Discussions relating to business practices, clinic policies, workplace dilemmas, and interpersonal conflicts are all common subjects for the PMA.

The public and industry also access the PMA as a resource on NHPC standards. This role is important to both NHPC members and the public as it provides a candid look into the realities of being a holistic health practitioner.

In 2015, the PMA attended all NHPC Connection Cafes and delivered workshops on ethical communication, similar in format to the 2014 PMA workshop on record-keeping. At each workshop, members shared experiences from their day-to-day practices — both the successes and the challenges. From these discussions, they gained a deeper understanding of the Code of Ethics and how to apply it as a guiding tool for ethical behaviour and to meet professional expectations. These workshops were the perfect arrangement for members to connect with the PMA, the NHPC, and their fellow members while learning invaluable practice information.

Complaints Resolution Process

The NHPC Complaints Resolution Process, as set out in Article 10 of the NHPC Bylaws, is the means by which the Association addresses allegations of professional misconduct of a member or former member.

Conduct justifying a complaint is categorized as Personal or Business Misconduct. Examples of Personal Misconduct include working outside of one's scope of practice, or inappropriate touch or communication. Examples of Business Misconduct include inadequate recordkeeping, poor receipt or billing practices, or advertising services in a manner that diminishes the credibility and honour of the profession.

The Complaints Director receives the allegations and processes the complaint in accordance with Article 10 of the NHPC Bylaws. The Executive Director may impose interim suspensions or interim conditions after assessing the complaint. This decision is based upon risk to public safety.

The NHPC's Code of Ethics clearly outlines ethical behaviours expected of NHPC members. The Ethical Standards that make up the code are intended to inform, guide, and support reflection and decision-making in a holistic health practice.

Leadership Committee of the Board of Directors

The Leadership Committee's goals are developing Board leadership, seeking Board nominations from within the NHPC membership, succession planning, and ensuring a smooth transition for each new NHPC Board member.

At every opportunity — whether it was in meetings, at conferences, or at Connections Cafes — the Committee actively promoted the many benefits of Board membership. At the first quarter meeting in 2015,

the Leadership Committee conducted interviews with the NHPC Board of Directors as part of the Annual Board Evaluation and succession planning process.

In the fall, the Board of Directors welcomed three new members to the Board: Helen Aikens (New Glasgow, Nova Scotia), Amanda Roth (Edmonton, Alberta), and Tanya Wagner (Saskatoon, Saskatchewan).



2015 LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Jeff Lazo

Chairperson/Board Representative

Carla Pentz

Co-Chair/Member at Large

Don Himmelman

*Past President of the Board of Directors/
Member at Large*

Paulla Schmidt

Member at Large

Michele Huszar

*Past President of the Board of Directors/
Board Representative*

Membership

Competency Equivalency Exam (CEE)

The CEE is a two-part examination which includes both a written and a practical component and is an opportunity for NHPC massage therapists to demonstrate a high standard of competence.

Three years ago, the NHPC developed the CEE in response to the insurance industry changing standards for claims eligibility. The NHPC worked closely with top industry professionals, including a leading psychometrician, professional educators, insurance representatives, and industry contacts to ensure that the examination meets the needs of a variety of stakeholders and is consistent with the national Inter-jurisdictional competencies for massage therapy.

Continued Competency Program (CCP)

The CCP is a mandatory program for Regular members to maintain their professional skills and knowledge in order to remain in "Good Standing" with the Association. Activities eligible for CCP credits include attending and participating in educational workshops and conferences, viewing relevant DVDs, reading and writing research papers, studying books, and volunteering at NHPC-hosted events. Twenty credits are required within every two-year cycle. Mandatory components of the CCP include Ethics, First Aid, and CPR.

A random audit ensures that members are acquiring their credits and submitting their certificates to the NHPC. The NHPC supports members in meeting their CCP requirements prior to, during, and after auditing periods.

Membership Renewals

In response to member feedback, the NHPC has continued to streamline the existing online renewal process.

In 2015, retention rate was the highest it has been in Association history.

Membership Recruitment

In 2015, the NHPC visited many schools as a part of its School Visits Program. In addition, the NHPC attended two membership recruitment tradeshow, including the Yoga Conference and Show in Toronto, Ontario, in April and The International Kinesiology Conference in Banff, Alberta, in September.

New membership recruitment events are great opportunities to meet with students from a variety of disciplines, to share the work of the NHPC, and to present the benefits of membership to potential new members. Furthermore, they enable the NHPC to keep up-to-date and monitor the curriculums of various schools. Because of these recruitment efforts, the NHPC welcomes hundreds of new members each year.

New Modality: STAMINA®

The NHPC Board of Directors approved the STAMINA® modality in 2015. STAMINA® is now recognized by the NHPC as a specialization-level modality within the domain of soft-tissue manipulation. STAMINA® training provides practitioners with the knowledge and skills to align muscles in specific directions, which results in improved muscle tension, line of pull, and load distribution in the body.

Discount Provider Program

In response to member feedback, the NHPC expanded its current discount provider program and introduced three new discount providers: GoodLife Fitness, Perkopolis, and TELUS. The NHPC also negotiated better rates on current discount provider services and products.



Member Advocacy



Government Relations

The NHPC's role in Government Relations spans all jurisdictions — provincial and territorial, as well as municipal and federal governments. In 2015, the Association's advocacy was primarily focused on Alberta, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, the Northwest Territories, and Nova Scotia activities. Additional engagement included the cities of Edmonton, Toronto, and Yellowknife. In all these locations, the NHPC has represented members' best interests in helping policy makers understand how their decisions impact practitioners.

Throughout the year, building respectful and professional relationships with like-minded organizations was a high priority. Although relationships may differ from one province to another, the purpose is the same: to support each other in shared priorities, including the regulation of massage therapy.

In order to better understand the jurisdictional priorities of massage therapists, the NHPC conducted direct member consultations in 2015 in three provinces: Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Nova Scotia. In Manitoba, where massage therapy members were surveyed in a previous year, the NHPC worked with the Massage Therapy Association of Manitoba (MTAM) towards the development of a regulatory college in the province.

ALBERTA

The NHPC, the Massage Therapist Association of Alberta (MTAA), and the Remedial Massage Therapists Association (RMTA) conducted a joint survey for all three associations' members to determine members' positions on regulating massage therapy and related issues. Massage therapists across the province were in favour of regulating the practice with conditions that included that they would not be required to write an entry exam and that they be treated fairly.

The NHPC, MTAA, and RMTA's Executive Directors continue to work on building a model to address members' priorities and will prepare a recommendation to bring to their respective Boards in 2016.

MANITOBA

Manitoba's Health Professions Advisory Board made a recommendation to the Government of Manitoba to proceed with regulation in 2015. The Minister of Health has asked that the NHPC and MTAM work together to address issues that were identified during the assessment process in order to move forward with regulation. Prior to the Minister's request, the NHPC had already invited MTAM's Executive Director and Board of Directors President to meet, and this has resulted in a highly respectful working relationship. The NHPC and MTAM Boards also met and steady progress is being made with the associations working together towards the regulation of massage therapy in Manitoba.

SASKATCHEWAN

Saskatchewan NHPC members were invited to take part in a massage therapy member survey similar to the one in Alberta. The results indicated strong support for regulation under the conditions that there be no entry exam required for currently practising massage therapists.

The NHPC took members' priorities to the government and were able, after a comprehensive member letter-writing campaign, to convince the Saskatchewan government to engage all stakeholders in the formation of the criteria for a college. The NHPC took the lead in organizing the first meeting of all stakeholders.

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

The Northwest Territories government recently passed the new Health Professions Act, which will facilitate the regulation of all health professions. This is the first step of many leading to the regulation of massage therapy. As several other health professions may be addressed first, it could be some time before massage therapy regulation discussions begin.

NOVA SCOTIA

The NHPC met with the Massage Therapists' Association of Nova Scotia (MTANS) and Massage Therapists' and Wholistic Practitioners' Association of the Maritimes (MTWPAM) to discuss working together towards massage therapy regulation. As well, the NHPC met with its Nova Scotia members to determine their priorities. It was found that while massage therapy members are supportive of regulation, they are opposed to writing an entry exam. The Nova Scotia government has asked associations to meet and address several areas of concern prior to making a decision regarding regulation. The NHPC has taken the initiative to invite MTANS and MTWPAM to meet in order to jointly address the Government of Nova Scotia's questions.



Industry Relations

The NHPC met with several insurance companies and industry-related organizations across Canada in 2015. This involved in-person meetings, building and maintaining relationships, and working closely with the industry.

A highlight of the past year for the NHPC was successfully advocating to the Worker's Safety and Compensation Commission (WSCC) for recognition of NHPC massage therapy members. The WSCC provides public injury and disability insurance in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut.

Earlier in the year, the NHPC attended the Canadian Life and Health Insurance Association (CLHIA) Claims Conference, as a delegate and an exhibitor, to meet with over 70 insurance companies and other associations and colleges. It was an opportunity for the NHPC to connect on various topics, such as the Association's processes, holistic health, and extended health benefit plans, as well developing the relationship with CHLIA and the insurance industry.

The NHPC continued its advocacy work with TELUS Health and insurance companies in the eClaims agreement — including a request for the inclusion of Manulife and Sun Life exempted members. This advocacy work progressed throughout the year and will continue into 2016.

The NHPC will continue advocating for the recognition of massage therapists and other holistic health practitioner members to insurance companies in 2016. This includes the federal programs of the Canadian Armed Forces, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and Veterans Affairs Canada, that offer extended health benefits, as well as Saskatchewan Government Insurance and Workers' Compensation Board in Saskatchewan.

The NHPC will also be focusing on research opportunities through grant-funding proposals, partnerships with research organizations, and other sources to further support holistic health advocacy in 2016.

Education and Events

Throughout 2015, the NHPC continued to focus on facilitating the growth and development of members through continuing education and peer-networking opportunities.

Continuing Education Opportunities

The NHPC increased the number of interactive continuing education events during the year, welcoming seasoned presenters from Australia, Canada, and the United States. The new events included:

- four ethics webinars
- two cadaver lab workshops (Saskatoon, Saskatchewan)
- a manual lymphatic drainage certification workshop (Saskatoon, Saskatchewan)
- an advanced myofascial techniques workshop (Calgary, Alberta)
- 10 free ethical communication workshops presented in conjunction with in-person Connections Cafes

Connections Cafes

The open, conversational format of Connections Cafes continued to be successful in engaging members. These meetings were held in six provinces and territories. Important Association updates, invaluable input, ideas, and concerns were shared at these powerful member networking events — all of which contribute to the planning and initiatives to be implemented by the Association in the coming years.

Throughout the year, NHPC Board members and staff visited:

- Calgary, Edmonton, Fort McMurray, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, and Red Deer, Alberta
- Kelowna and Victoria, British Columbia
- Winnipeg, Manitoba

- Yellowknife, Northwest Territories
- Dartmouth, Nova Scotia

Even more members were consulted in combined Connections Cafe and massage therapy regulation discussions, which saw NHPC staff visiting the Saskatchewan cities of Moose Jaw, North Battleford, Prince Albert, Regina, Saskatoon, Swift Current, Weyburn, and Yorkton.

The NHPC's Practice Management Advisor presented one-hour ethical communication workshops at 10 cities across the country during the 2015 Connections Cafes. The workshop received very positive feedback, with members expressing interest in similar training opportunities to be delivered at future Connections Cafes.

2015 Conference Series

Two NHPC conferences were held in 2015: the first, in Edmonton, Alberta, from May 29 to 31, and the second, in Winnipeg, Manitoba, from September 25 to 26.

The Edmonton conference was held in conjunction with the Association's AGM, and both combined conferences exceeded attendance expectations, surpassing the 2014 national conference.

The conference series aimed to enable NHPC members to access world-class continuing education, to network with peers, to earn NHPC CCP credits, and to learn new skills to incorporate into their practices, enhancing the value of NHPC membership.

Workshops relating to over 11 NHPC modalities were presented during the conference series, including energy work, massage therapy, myofascial release, polarity therapy, Qigong, reflexology, Roling, STAMINA®, Thai massage, visceral and deep tissue massage, and yoga. Furthermore, there were presentations on business, ethics, First Aid, and CPR training available. The conference series hosted 35 world-class workshops presented by 26 presenters.

Communications

In 2015, communications with members and the public increased significantly.

This included development of a new website that will feature considerably more information on holistic health than the previous website, continued bi-monthly electronic news to members, a more active presence in social media, and participation in highly attended health and wellness tradeshows and events. All this activity has raised the profile of holistic health and holistic health practitioners in the eyes of the public.

Website

Design of the new NHPC website was complete in 2015 with development starting late in 2015 and continuing into early 2016. The new website will be launched after the 2016 spring renewal period.

It will feature improved navigation and functionality, intended for a broader range of users, and will support a variety of user devices. New content has been developed that supports the NHPC's increased advocacy and public awareness efforts. Specifically, this includes more information about holistic health in general and the Association standards. The online *Holistic Health Guide* is another key piece of the new content.

The member section of the website will help members complete more membership tasks online and update them on topics relevant to their location. It will also offer a robust system for providing member-specific information in a confidential way.

Public Awareness and Engagement

The NHPC increased its visibility significantly by attending high profile tradeshows and health fundraising events, such as:

- Shine Festival (St. Albert, Alberta)
- The 50 Plus Living Show (Saskatoon, Saskatchewan)
- The Edmonton Women's Show (Edmonton, Alberta)
- The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society Light the Night Walk (Saskatoon, Saskatchewan)
- The Multiple Sclerosis Walk (St. Albert, Alberta)
- The Wellness Expo (Winnipeg, Manitoba)
- What Women Want (Regina, Saskatchewan)

Participation in these events resulted in significant public interest, as many NHPC members volunteered their services for free demonstrations. These demonstrations offered the public a means of observing and experiencing different practices and discussing the benefits of holistic health. It also connected the public with practitioners offering services they were interested in.

Media attention was also heightened throughout the year, with interviews at two television outlets and features in publications. As well, the NHPC received a number of unsolicited requests for partnerships as a result of this heightened exposure. These are being reviewed for 2016. Plans were developed in 2015 to further increase this visibility in order to promote the NHPC as the first stop for information on holistic health.

A new publication, the *Holistic Health Guide*, was published in 2015. The *Guide* lists and describes all the NHPC-recognized holistic health treatments. It will be delivered to NHPC members and be available to the public and members for online purchase early in 2016.

Social Media

The NHPC continued its involvement on Twitter, Facebook, and the members-only Facebook group, NHPC Speak Easy. All channels grew in popularity throughout the year, and plans were finalized to launch a blog in 2016. The NHPC is developing blog content that will reflect national wellness days and the most popular topics discussed on social media.

NHPC News

The bi-monthly electronic newsletter continued to update members on advocacy efforts, continuing education opportunities, events, industry news, and membership-related information. It is the NHPC's most popular means of sharing information, with high reader open rates.

Advertising

The NHPC continued to offer its members and the public advertising opportunities through the website — primarily in the form of course listings and job postings.



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