

Tereza Van Horn

Subject: FW: Nevada LMT's need assistance!!

Sent: Tuesday, May 5, 2020 1:59 PM

To: Sandy J. Anderson <sjanderson@lmt.nv.gov>

Subject: Nevada LMT's need assistance!!

I'm a 22 year veteran in the Massage industry. Also an Independent Contractor working in Las Vegas.

I have had zero communication and/or help from DETR.

I have had no income since Mid March 2020.

My savings are critically low, and food is becoming scarce due to lack of \$.

At this point, I am considering a career change, and massage won't be part of my plans....

Please help us Independent Contractors to get the \$ we need to get us through!!!

Wendy Nickell, LMT~ NVMT#6459

Over 21 years of clinical experience

Tereza Van Horn

Subject: FW: Massage reopening

Sent: Tuesday, May 5, 2020 11:57 AM
To: Sandy J. Anderson <sjanderson@lmt.nv.gov>
Subject: Massage reopening

Hello,

I'm writing this email to express my concern about the possibility of massage therapies opening too soon. Nevada has done such an excellent job of flattening the curve and keeping our COVID-19 numbers low. I fear that if people are able to start getting massages again, our number of corona virus cases will skyrocket. I can't think of a more easily susceptible way to contract it than by getting a massage. There is way too much bodily contact. I find it ironic that these places that want to reopen are saying they will practice social distancing by not having to touch the debit cards for payment, yet find it perfectly ok for the therapist to touch the entire body of the client?

I urge you to hold off on the reopening of massage therapy for as long as possible. I believe it should actually be one of the last things that should open.

Thank you for your consideration,
Tricia Fox

Sent from my iPhone

Tereza Van Horn

Subject:

FW:

Subject:

To whom it may concern:

Sending my views on the decision to open Massage facilities in a Spa Resort Setting.

1. How can Massage Therapists feel confident in the process of expediting the registration procedure? Strong possibility miss handled (pen, paper, counter tops, doors) and contaminated with the Virus.
2. From registration the guest is handed off to the attendant. What measures will be taken to assure everyone will be protected at this point?
3. The guest will need to have access to the Bathrooms, Locker room. How will this be handled? Strong chance guest and staff will be exposed to contamination most will let their guard down.
4. Finally addressing the Service Staff.
 - A. Strong chances of Wide Spreading
 - B. Skin on skin touch
 - C. Breathing- client and Massage Therapist.
 - D. During a session client needs to leave to use the restroom, itching their skin, touches their nose or mouth , coughs and sneezes? How can we maintain sanitation when some of these situations happen?
 - E. What happens when the Massage Therapist does the same?
 - F. What's the protocol for sanitation?
 - G. Discarding of sheets, pillowcases, use of products, handling of door handles, cabinets, house phones, seating area how is this to be handled safely?
 - H. Who will oversee all the areas of the Spa at all times to maintain sanitation?
 - I. It's a challenge now having guests follow the Spa Rules maintaining order and safety.

Like most of us I have strong concerns, fears and lots of confusion of the Covid 19. I personally feel we are not out of the woods to a solution. Opening too soon could and would be a disaster to the public safety and ourselves. Please take the time to thoroughly evaluate different situations that will happen.

Thank you for your time and corporation reading this letter.

Sharon Manning
Massage Therapist
Working for a Spa Resort on the strip in Las Vegas Nevada.

Tereza Van Horn

Subject: FW: Reopening guidelines and closure credit.

Hello S J Anderson,

I am writing to weigh in on the upcoming plan to re-open Massage Establishments and resume the business of providing massage therapy in Nevada.

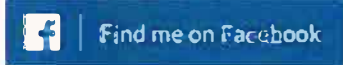
Obviously our trade cannot be performed while maintaining 6ft social distancing, therefore we will have to take other precautions to ensure the safety of ourselves and our community. In terms of risk, I urge you to consider how dentists are able to continue serving their patients given the realities of COVID -19 and to acknowledge that while they are providing a medical service and are considered essential, they are in fact at potentially greater risk of disease transmission because of how and where they are in contact with their patients than are massage therapists.

I also wanted to humbly suggest the idea of issuing credits or license renewal deferment to all licensees for an amount of time equal to the time that the government ordered us to cease operations. Not only are we suffering the loss of income but we have effectively lost licensed time during the shutdown. This credit/deferment would be of great value in the interest of keeping our businesses viable and able to eventually resume operations.

Thank You,
Ryan Without LMT



Ryan Without
BA LMT BCTMB, Therapeutic Bodywork LLC



Tereza Van Horn

Subject: FW: Re-opening

May 5, 2020

Nevada State Board

Dear Board Members,

I have been a massage therapist since 2006. I keep hearing on social media on how they will bring us back to work. Not being Unionized or having any kinda organization, we are left with the board making decisions on our well being. With everything that is happening with social distancing, and nonsymtomatic spread I see no way of going back safely without a vaccine. Or have the Virus under control, and with every state doing something different this Virus is not going away this year. We are in between a rock and a hard spot. Even if we go back sooner than later who is going to be comfortable getting a massage? I do not envy the boards responsibility to do what is best for the Therapist and our guest.

One more thing and I am sure you are aware. We work on tourist, no locals come to the strip.

Thank you for your time,

Ovid E Owens

Tereza Van Horn

Subject:

FW: lmt

Dear Board of Massage,

I know we are all dying to get back to work and brainstorming to get us back safely. I massage at Massage Heights Southpointe and was sick in Jan/Feb. My coworkers passed it back and forth because obviously no one has weeks of paid sick days or even sick days, I am part time. We need some form of contract for mt safety, a 2 week quarantine and then another 3 weeks to get better and finally released to work with a dr. note. We are in such tight quarters at Massage Heights and there is maybe space to social distance with 3 people in there. My fear is the sick people that will come in not knowing they are sick and infecting everyone there and we all get fired. We should demand spas/massage be the last thing to open after we get reassurance that we won't lose our jobs. N95 for clients and therapist would ease a little tension but not much. Thanks so much and I'll be at the meeting.

Stay Home,
Penny James

Tereza Van Horn

Subject: FW: my cry for help

FLAWLESS SILHOUETTES/MASSAGE CUSTOMS
8820 S. Maryland Parkway, Suite 115
Las Vegas, NV 89123

To whom it may concern,

My name is Michael Ortiz, Jr. and I am the owner of Massage Customs and the Operator of Flawless Silhouette Day Spa in Las Vegas, NV.

I am contacting you in regards to the Business Reopening plan concerning personal care facilities in our state.

First, I would like to provide you some background information that I believe will be extremely beneficial to you in responding to my questions and concerns.

Our salon/day spa is rather unique in that while we have fourteen (14) practitioners offering a wide variety of services including nails, hair and massage, we are separated into different areas and a portion of them are part time (2 days a week). Additionally, there are ten individual rooms where clients are seen, and only one room would have a maximum of four people in it, and that is very rare. The majority of our clientele is seen one on one in private rooms that are traditionally closed door for privacy. At full capacity, there would never be more than twenty-one (21) people including staff, in the building, which is approximately 2600 square feet. I believe this layout and ability to minimize contact between everyone distinctly separates us from high density salons with common service areas/bays or booths. The restroom is even singular—no stalls, multiple sinks or more than one person at a time. All services are by appointment only, and our facility has never taken walk in customers. This means that each professional knows their customers on a basis that allows for frank discussion concerning health concerns and requirements going forward. While a small area is provided for clients prior to appointments, that area can easily be closed off should it be required. That area is separated from all private client rooms as well as the main desk. Payments are handled between the professional provider and client and could be processed in the private rooms, negating the need for any type of front desk. All appointments are handled by the professional provider or by a tele-scheduler who takes calls and sets up appointments off site. Clearly, we are not the typical relaxation driven day spa: Massage Customs deals clientele mainly comes in for pain relief and therapy. With individual proprietors offering specialized services, people come in for their appointment and exit when finished. There is no day room or Jacuzzi area for people to linger in.

My next concern that I would like you to be aware of is the financial chaos and distress this has caused for each of us as small businesses gathered under the umbrella of the location. I cannot express to you in strong enough language just how devastating this has been for us. We closed our doors the day of the shut down order. That is over six weeks without revenue. I am very grateful for the rent abeyance provided by Governor Sisolak since our property management is not providing any type of rent relief that I could pass along to the people who rent their own rooms. We fully understand that we will be paying the arrearages once we are allowed to reopen. I have attempted to obtain small business assistance loan however I haven't even been responded to that my application was acknowledged as received. Being able to reopen soon would increase our possibility of survival and recovery. It is paramount to maintain our personal monthly debts such as mortgages, utilities, and household expenses that we begin to provide income and return to being self sufficient.

I was greatly heartened by your press conference wherein you began outlining our State's road to recovery. I believe, for the reasons listed above, we are a perfect fit for the phase one reopening, however I am not clear as to whether or not you are actually allowing any personal care facility to reopen until you have heard from the Cosmetology Board. Since our location does not fit the traditional definition of a salon or spa, I am hoping that you will agree and sanction the reopening of small businesses such as mine that would appear to fit the criteria in everything but name.

I am asking you for clear communication as to whether or not a business such as mine qualifies to reopen under the guidelines you have promulgated. We are not a large business owned by one entity with a large common area with numerous employees and clients sharing space such as you would find in a traditional salon or nail spa. Rather, we are a group of independent businesses that share a common roof. I would also be very interested in learning what other requirements you would like to see employed in business such as ours. I am completely on board with requiring clients to wait in their cars until their appointment, increased and intensified cleaning and sanitizing between clients, gloves where possible—I just need to get our doors reopened and begin defining "the new normal" for our business.

Thank you for your time and consideration and I eagerly await your reply,

MICHAEL ORTIZ, JR.
Owner
Flawless Silhouettes/ Massage Customs

Tereza Van Horn

Subject: FW: Reopening Massage/facial salons..

This is to express my deep concern for the reopening of the Massage and Facial salons across the valley.... please take in to consideration that it wd be extremely dangerous and even life threatening if either a guest or an employee contracted the virus... there is no way to be safe performing a massage or a facial even though they will say they are taking every precaution available.... a client cd not even know they had it and spread it through any number of ways... Please please just wait to open until the last phase as it is truly a matter of life and death... they would be like lambs led to slaughter.... and half of the day spas do t even have sinks in their rooms... help keep everyone safe and tell them to stay and home!... masks and gloves are not going to be enough when it is literally a hands on treatment.... thank you!...thank you!..

Tereza Van Horn

Subject:

FW: Question

Can massage therapist that are self employed and work one on one be included if not all of us on phase one? Yes will wear mask and face shields or goggles and a 30 min minimum in between clients so we have time to wipe down all surfaces and spray disinfectant. We are taught how to sanitize between clients in general and it would be safer for both the client and you than the grocery store. We would also pre screen with COVID -19 questions and temp check each time and if any symptoms, the client's session canceled. I attached a release form that I plan to use.

Karla's Massage & Bodywork
Karla Rice, LMT(NVMT6591)

Tereza Van Horn

Subject:

FW: Stay at Home

I would like to request that massage places and facials be deemed as non essential especially as they are in high contact. Many massage places may have older workers as well who are in high susceptibility but have to work due to living expenses but unemployment would work better for them. Reopening these types of businesses would be very risky with older workers and lots of customers coming in. Thank you for your time.

Tereza Van Horn

Subject:

FW: Re-opening massage/aesthetics

Sent from my iPhone Please do NOT reopen any massage /aesthetics business at this time. I am a regular client at many local establishments and for myself and therapists I beg you to keep these establishments closed during this pandemic. The risk is too great at this time. The massage envy that I have gone to in green valley does not have sinks in any of the therapists rooms and even before this pandemic I thought was unsanitary. NOW ITS IMPERATIVE TO INSTALL SINKS !!!!! The hands on of being a massage therapist is not and can't be considered safe until we have a vaccine!!! How can it possibly be considered at this stage???? Please, please do not open any place that gives massages /facials.

Tereza Van Horn

Subject: FW: Reopening massage establishments

Hello,

I am a licensed massage therapist of 20 years working at the Aria hotel spa on the strip in Las Vegas. I have been following the pandemic from early on and removed myself from work on March 13th. We received an email from management that day that told us not to shake the hands of our guests. I couldn't imagine how if we weren't to shake their hand we were supposed to be safe massaging them in close quarters for over an hour.

I have a major concern with going back to work in the middle of a virus and pandemic we are still learning about. There is no cure and it's deadly and highly contagious. I for one am not comfortable sacrificing the health of myself, family and community just try try and "get back to work". My health is the most important thing to me.

In addition to that, these are suggestions I have to offer as our new world unfolds when Nevada's numbers are *consistently down* and we are safer to go back:

- mandatory temperature checks for therapists and clients
- limiting the amount of people in the spa
- mandatory masks for all staff and guests, including when not performing a service
- shorter shifts for our therapists to limit exposure time (10 hour shifts are horrible aside from this virus and I do not work full time because I don't want to put my body through four 10 hour shifts per week. This is something that HAS to change for our therapists in general. Full time= 30 hours)
- all guests must answer if they have experienced any symptoms and where they have traveled.
- no absence penalty for calling out with any Covid symptoms- it needs to be encouraged and not feared
- mandatory showers for guests before the service
- available hand sanitizer through the spa
- 20 min minimum between guests for proper sanitation
- make going back to work voluntary, in order of seniority. Those who choose to protect themselves can still collect unemployment.

But number one is I WILL NOT FEEL SAFE GOING BACK TO WORK UNTIL IT IS SAFE TO SHAKE HANDS AND SOCIAL DISTANCING GUIDELINES HAVE BEEN LIFTED.

Thank you for taking the time to listen to our voices!

Alethea Shelton

Sent from my iPad

Wendy Owens

healingbiz@aol.com

May 5, 2020

Nevada State Board

Dear Esteemed Board Members,

I have been a Massage Therapist for 26 years, all in Nevada and am currently the Lead Massage Therapist at Mandalay Bay. I have worked in the medical massage field, the spas and have owned a business that taught NCBTMB CE classes. I taught many classes at Nevada School of Massage for many years, including my specialty - Professional Development. I have taught at least 1,000 of now-graduated therapists.

I appreciate your time reviewing this letter. The majority of my co-workers, as well as most therapists I know that work on the strip share these same views. I am writing you to discuss concerns regarding the current pandemic as it relates to massage. Specifically, in regards to the plan to re-open Nevada, massage and massage establishments.

The virus is far more infectious than the flu. Look at all of the businesses planning on making contactless payment, ready to shield employees from the potential risk of catching the virus with plexiglass. This shows it is not safe for close-contact workers! The science indicates a person must remain at least six feet away from another to avoid transmission. All of this we know, yet some think it might be acceptable to receive or give massage - an action that requires close personal contact. Standing only inches from the client, touching skin on skin. It is impossible to eliminate the risk of infection as a massage therapist or client. The highly contagious and lethal nature of this virus is a ticking time bomb for those in this industry, if we are forced to return to work too soon.

We must assume every client is COVID-19 positive and asymptomatic, therefore potentially contagious. Even with proper PPE (gloves, gown, masks); we cannot

eliminate the risk. Working on clients at this stage negates EVERYTHING we have ever learned about massage and contraindications.

We must not, in good conscience, place the public or massage therapists at risk. Contact is completely unsafe. Massage cannot be done safely during this time. We must wait until testing is more readily available, when contact tracing has begun, when the infection rate has dropped significantly across the country and when PPE is available.

I implore you to lobby on our behalf to stay closed until this downward trajectory, and stage returning only to those that have been tested positive for the antibodies to the virus. Otherwise, we will lose our unemployment benefits by returning too early and the infection rate spiking (as has already been shown by those that have opened too soon) and being forced a second, more debilitating shut down. After a downward trajectory, stage returning only to those that have been tested positive for the antibodies to the virus.

Please help us advocate for public safety, for the contact tracing and testing. Only then should you assist us in navigating a data-led slow return, backed by science and not finances. I know many of us are struggling but we cannot afford to put the lives of ourselves and the many visitors to Las Vegas on the line. This is not the time to gamble on Las Vegas.

Sincerely yours,

Wendy Owens

License #NVI154

Dear Ms. Anderson,

I am forwarding a link to you from Tracy Walton's blog because it expresses my concerns about doing massage during the COVID-19 pandemic. Please include the Open Letter from massage therapist and educator Tracy Walton in the packet of information to both board members and the public. All of our lives are at stake.

<https://www.tracywalton.com/our-blog/>

Sincerely,
Carol Garlington
NVMT8345

Dear Ms. Anderson,

I am forwarding this to you as it closely reflects my opinion on the matter of massage therapists returning to work during this crisis. I would add that most, if not all, local spa establishments have even less quality ventilation in their treatment rooms than the hotel spas.

I think it would be much wiser to wait until we get a better handle on this situation, ie: widespread access to testing, etc., before we start sending therapists to risk their lives, and possibly the health of their loved ones, and their clients. I believe it is too much of a gamble at this time.

Thank you for your effort and time in this matter.

Sincerely,

John Maxwell CMMP, NVLMT # 1252, NCBMT #399067

Additional individuals that provided the same response for public comment are listed under the signature line.

Dear Ms. Anderson,

We are writing this email in response to the special meeting scheduled for Friday, May 8, 2020 to address the reopening of massage establishments. It is important that you are informed before the meeting of the concerns of massage therapists in this changing world.

We believe any talk of massage therapists going back to work is ultimately premature, and until there is a vaccine, or Covid19 is thoroughly understood and diminished, the protocols that would ensure that massage therapists would be protected are non-existent. The protocols that are being talked about at the moment for opening businesses/strip resorts may somewhat protect workers and guests, however, these same protocols are ineffective for the massage therapist:

1. Social distancing of 6 ft. is impossible.
2. Plexiglass barriers – obviously impossible

3. Wearing face masks and gloves; how does a guest receiving massage lay face down with a mask?

All the above protocols may work at restaurants, or other open spaces. Massage therapists typically work in an exceedingly small, confined space. Ventilation is typically poor. Rooms are usually 10 ft. x 10 ft.

There is a big difference between the local spa and the spa that is located in the resorts on the strip, as they cater to national and international visitors. It is like playing roulette as these spas experience a remarkably high volume of guests. The strip spa locations would be even more dangerous if they opened too soon. How would it be possible to protect the massage therapist against an invisible enemy?

The majority of us are deeply concerned for our safety and well-being. An added concern is that some massage therapists are immune compromised or have family members that have compromised health issues.

We appreciate the Nevada Massage Board listening to our concerns. Currently, the Board is the only representation we have. We are depending on the Board speaking on our behalf to make sure massage therapists will be protected from being put in a position of risking their lives. Massage is not an essential, life sustaining necessity. You cannot get any closer to a person in any other non-essential career.

In conclusion, we have a long way to go in understanding Covid19 and its long-term effects. People do want to return to work and regain some normalcy in their lives. Most importantly, it needs to be done in a responsible, thoughtful, and careful manner.

Please click on the link below to read an article written by a notable educator in the massage field before the meeting on Friday. It is the most comprehensive and thoughtful piece that we have read so far, and she hits on every point. We would be wise to heed her call.

<https://www.tracywalton.com/an-open-letter-about-re-opening-to-massage-therapy-employers/?fbclid=IwAR1X5a5I75QergQhefOV1ffDAOWL2NV7o353A6HTyV7LpIN0EXK7opXLcF0>

Thank you for your time,

Susan M. Szczygiel, LMT, NVMT.1849

Serge Dahan, LMT, NVMT.713, Massage Educator; Approved CEU Provider, NCBTMB

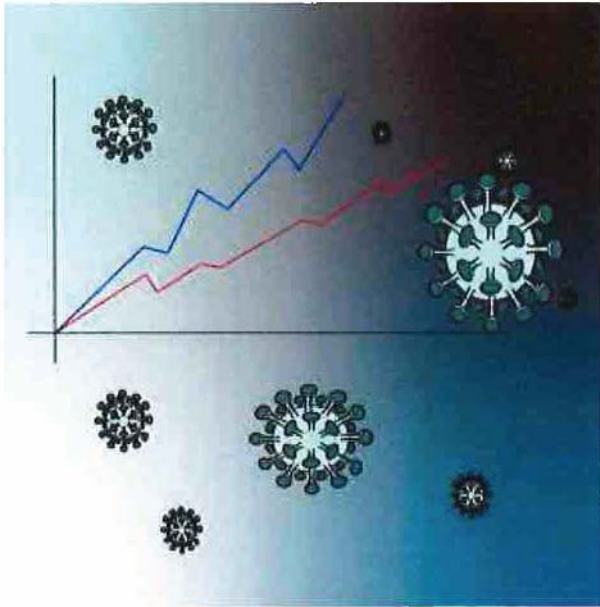
Lindsay D. Berg, NVMT.5277

John Maxwell CMMP, NVMT #1252, NCBMT #3990067

An Open Letter about Re-Opening — to Massage Therapy Employers

MAY 2, 2020 BY TRACY WALTON 111 COMMENTS

To owners of spas, franchises, chiropractic offices. High-volume massage therapy settings. You in Georgia, Florida, Oklahoma and so many other states allowing re-opening:



Employers, much has been made of your efforts to step up your safety protocols and get ready for re-opening.

On the face of it, your efforts are admirable. You have devised cloth PPE, and swapped leads on EPA-registered disinfectants. You have added time between clients for your therapists to wipe down the room. You've stepped up contactless payment, and some of you have installed arrays of Plexiglas in the reception area.

All for the Grand Re-Opening of 2020.

For guidance, you have consulted the CDC, OSHA, other professions, your governors, massage therapy professional associations, and boards. Some of you have hired consultants. You have processed a dizzying amount of information.

I've read a lot of it. Much of it seems earnest and thoughtful. An attempt to protect your staff and the public while re-opening.

You've left out only one thing.

You cannot really protect your staff and the public while re-opening.

Not now, anyway. All of the cloth, paper, products, clothing changes, intake questions, turnaround time, and Plexiglas cannot and will not protect them.

Deep down, I think you know this.

You *know* this.

Proof: You set up contactless payment, right?

Because *contact is not safe.*

You know this situation reads like a Saturday Night Live cold open? It is *parody*.

Denial is a fine thing, but it takes some mental gymnastics sometimes: “Maybe contact is safe! Sort of safe. Some contact is safe...as long as other people do it.”

Many meetings later, voila! We can make contact safe. In our contact-free formula, each therapist will:

- Make contact, while standing a foot or so away from a client
- Place hands *right on the skin*—as in, can't even slide a credit card between the therapist's hand and the client's skin (so much for contactless payment.)
- For an hour
- With a mask that, when worn perfectly, is only partially effective
- While remembering not to touch anything—except the client—after handwashing/gloving.

All in the same small airspace. A therapist, a client, and a highly contagious virus.

What could go wrong?

You cannot operate at volume, while fully protecting your staff or the public.

The word is out. In the groups, on the webs. Some self-employed massage therapists are making those lists, too, itching to come back. Gloves, check. Masks, check. Bleach, check.

But many other MTs are confused and terrified. Clients, too: The majority of Americans want to continue our current measures for a while, until it's safer. *Until we know more.*

I've seen all these opinions out there, but I've missed hearing from you. You're not out there making statements about *really* protecting people. If you are, you're not amplifying them.

Real protection would look like this:

- Form coalitions of employers (e.g., whole franchise chains, or all the franchises in a certain state, or within spa organizations)
- Take the position that massage therapy cannot be done safely and sustainably right now, just a few months into a pandemic and a poorly understood disease;
- Remain closed, so *that employees can continue to collect unemployment benefits*;
- Advocate for those benefits. Advocate for public safety. Be vocal: Put direct pressure on governors to carry out contact tracing, testing, and isolation. Insist they allow close-contact workers access to relief and stay closed until infections drop and PPE is widely available;
- Hold press conferences and town halls. Write op-eds. Dominate media and social media;
- Ask why governors' mansions, courts, and government buildings are not open for tours/business, while bowling alleys, restaurants, and your close-contact businesses are opening.

The following behaviors are *not* real protection:

- Working without a clear understanding of treatment room/building ventilation, and what that means for virus transmission;
- Offering massage without an understanding of COVID's **clotting risks**, how **stroke presents early in younger people** (newly identified complications of COVID), and whether it's even possible to manage that risk in massage therapy;
- Assuming that we can effectively screen for COVID by taking temperatures (Remember: In asymptomatic people, absence of fever doesn't indicate absence of infection);
- Providing sub-optimal PPE and disinfecting products;
- Opening while **testing, tracing, and isolation are inadequate**;
- Opening before infections have declined;
- "Learning as we go" – trying to employ conflicting, confusing messages about infection control protocols;
- Adding just 15 minutes between clients for infection steps that may require 20-25+ minutes on a good day. (I am hopeful that you plan to pay them for the additional time that this will take.)

You have an opportunity to protect people.

Instead, you're rushing to re-open.

The bottom line: It is not yet safe to return. The preponderance of public health opinion tells us that. We are still learning some of the basics about this virus. Our first death occurred just 9 weeks ago.

In the absence of benchmarks and information, governors who reopen are trivializing human life and safety. It is a social experiment—*their* experiment.

It is an outrage.

During an outrage, your best approach is to be outraged. Instead, you're focused on masks, disinfection, turnaround times, client communication. All important for seeing clients.

All when it is too early to see clients.

Please push back.

Refuse to supply the subjects for this experiment.

Support the safety and safety nets of your MTs. Coordinate a vocal, organized refusal to re-open prematurely.

Lobby on behalf of massage therapists.

They have no union and little bargaining power. They have been abandoned by some of our key leadership. They have been pummeled with conflicting information.

I've listened to employers and read some of that information. I think, it all sounds so *reasonable*. These are reasonable efforts, from good people who want to get people back to work just as much as their people want to work. Everyone wants to reassure. One colleague I admire—a franchise owner—reported on re-opening conversations among her peers and other leaders. Plenty of plans, protocols, and supplies.

When I asked, she reported not one conversation about the possibility of delaying re-opening. Nothing about putting on the brakes a bit, until more information comes in. Nothing about holding off until benchmarks are met.

No sense that a more reasonable approach would be to wait. Wait until it is clear how to navigate business with a brand new, highly contagious, deadly disease.

Your workers are your livelihood.

You can't prosper without them.

Now, they will hole up in your treatment rooms with your clients and guests, playing roulette at close range. You will have tried to do your best, but they'll still be unprotected.

There's still time to step out of the rush. If your state chooses not to care for your workers, you still can! Stop going along with the state, pretending contact is not contact and close contact is safe. Be that Plexiglas, for real. Shield your workers from loss of unemployment benefits. Agitate for relief.

Be the employer your massage therapists *want* to return to. Be the employer they trust with their safety.

It is tempting to return to normal.

This is America, the land of resourcefulness. Staggered schedules, clients waiting in the car instead of the waiting room. An intake from 6 feet away, cleanable covers over everything.

These measures might prevent most infections, but minor errors in infection control could be deadly.

Do you really want to experiment, a few weeks into an unprecedented pandemic?

For now, we are not ready.

Scientists after scientist has given us the requirements: that safe re-opening is conditioned on extensive testing, contact tracing, and isolation of infected individuals. Public health has not wavered on this point, yet it has not taken effect in any state. Not one.

Your governor's willingness to sidestep these norms is a willingness to light up in a dry forest, just miles from fires already raging. On April 2, just 4 weeks ago, one governor claimed *he had just learned* the virus could be transmitted by someone who was asymptomatic. Everyone else had known that for weeks.

Yet the same governor continues to ignore public health experts, and is willing to play fast-and-loose with your business, your workers, your clients, and your guests.

I really appreciate the attempts from all of you managing the spa and franchise industries, but no amount of your good faith effort can counteract that kind of recklessness.

And the heartbreak?

I don't claim to speak for all massage therapists, but I've listened to thousands of them over 30 years in the field. Most earn modest incomes. Little safety net, hardly any vacation. Occasional health insurance. Paycheck to paycheck. Massage therapy may be satisfying work, but our numbers have been dropping for years.

Now the lease is up. Some are closing permanently, retiring early, retraining. Social media is filling with sad, empty offices.

The results of this experiment will be more sadness and emptiness. We'll lose MTs to further disengagement from the field. If public health experts predict correctly, we'll lose more to illness and even death. Our numbers are heading fiercely in that direction.

As for the kind, compassionate, skilled people left standing in the profession? If you want a future with them, help them through this.

Step up.

Otherwise, it's just a show.