



## WHY BOARD CERTIFICATION?

In the early 1990's, there were few states that required licensure or regulated massage. In other words, someone could take a weekend course, receive a certificate, and call themselves a certified massage therapist. For those dedicated practitioners that actually attended and graduated from massage therapy school, we wanted something more—a way to show the entire nation that we had a higher level of education and were prepared to work with and help the public heal.

In 1992, a group of top profession leaders came together to build NCBTMB and created a certification program that would help elevate the standards of massage therapy. The founders of NCBTMB envisioned a national standard that could eventually be accepted by the entire country.

Soon, states began to incorporate licensure as a state requirement to practice legally in each state—but each state wasn't interested in creating an entry-level exam of their own. Many adopted NCBTMB's National Certification Exam to serve as that entry-level exam. The different level of credentials associated with the test became blurred—and certification seemed to slowly be losing its value.

In 2012, NCBTMB recognized that many massage therapy professionals did not truly know the difference between entry-level licensure and certification. To rectify this problem, NCBTMB created the Board Certification exam, as well as raised its minimal requirements. This change enables massage therapists to work towards higher certification than entry-level licensure—mirroring many other medical professions.

With Board Certification, the massage therapy profession can work together to elevate the profession as a whole, as well as work towards aligning with other medical professions that already recognize and support Board Certification.

Licensure concentrates on the public protection and to ensure therapists adhere to state rule and work safely on clients. Board Certification concentrates on raising the standards of massage therapists and the profession through higher education and credentialing.

There *is* a place for massage therapists to work alongside other medical professionals—and it begins with credentialing and Board Certification.

