

AMTA Convention in Ft. Worth, TX Highlights

Consumer Awareness Program, Affordable Care Act & Massage, Special Awards, Donation to Foundation

Association Creates Bob King Student Scholarship

Evanston, IL - Featuring a video review of its ongoing consumer awareness program, an inspiring keynote speaker and a panel of experts on health care integration, the American Massage Therapy Association® (AMTA®) national convention brought together some 1,300 participants from September 25 to 28 in Ft. Worth, Texas. The association also announced it has named its Student Scholarship in honor of Bob King, and presented a ceremonial check for **\$450,000 to the Massage Therapy Foundation.**

Attendees had access to more than **35 continuing education classes** featuring special programming options for students, teachers and researchers; and, they were able to enjoy the products and services of a **wealth of exhibitors in the AMTA Exhibit Marketplace.** They also could follow convention events through the AMTA iPhone and Android app designed to help them find their way around the convention.

The opening session of the convention included a video presentation on the association's commitment to increasing **consumer awareness of the health benefits of massage therapy.** Since it began its media relations program in May 2012, the association has reached hundreds of millions with its information. This year, the AMTA Massage Therapy Tour and targeted advertising engaged 20 metropolitan areas in 14 states, reached an audience of 46 million potential clients, and worked with nearly 100 member volunteers.

AMTA President Winona Bontrager announced that just days before, the AMTA Board of Directors had voted to name its Student Scholarship in honor of the late Bob King, a former AMTA national president and pioneer in the education of massage therapists. In her presentation of the ceremonial check to the Massage Therapy Foundation, Bontrager reinforced AMTA's commitment to be the primary benefactor of the foundation, reflecting AMTA's own research goals.

Keynote speaker Doc Hendley spoke to the power of pursuing your passion to overcome obstacles and staying focused on serving others. His amazing story of changing his life to bring fresh water to poor people throughout the world moved the audience, especially when he acknowledged that massage therapists already have decided their work is about helping people feel better.

AMTA continued its very successful Student Day program, with more than 200 students attending information sessions on planning for their careers and learning good business practices. More than 30 students from Missouri traveled overnight by bus to attend the daylong activities. This included students visiting the exhibit hall and interacting with experienced massage therapists throughout the day. Many of the students had opportunities to talk with the authors of their textbooks, making their visit especially exciting.

During the convention, the association's House of Delegates approved a **position statement to express AMTA's view on how a growing body of research indicates the value of massage for anxiety.**

A special convention closing session focused on the meaning of the Affordable Care Act for massage therapists. Four nationally-recognized experts on Medicare, insurance reimbursement, legal implications of the Act and how integrative therapies are impacted provided a 2 ½ hour continuing education class on the subject.

AMTA Recognizes Volunteers

The Awards Ceremony for AMTA volunteers is an important part of the opening session of the annual convention, as individuals and chapters are recognized for their outstanding contributions to the association and the profession. The Distinguished Service Award was given to Lori Keith of New Jersey. She was especially recognized for her dedication and commitment to serving AMTA members and for her special efforts after Hurricane Sandy.

Rick Rosen of North Carolina was recognized with the President's Award. Also receiving recognition for 30 years as an AMTA member, Rosen was acknowledged for all he has contributed to the massage therapy profession.

Other individual award recipients include:

Rick Garbowski (GA) - Jerome Perlinski Teacher of the Year

Xerlan Deery (PA) - Mentor of the Year Award

Richard Lomeli (CA) - Sports Massage Achiever Award

Michaele Colizza (RI) - Humanitarian Award

Scott Raymond (CT) - Government Relations Activist Award

John Combe (OR) - National Meritorious Award

A complete list of individual and chapter award recipients will be available soon on the AMTA website at www.amtamassage.org.

AMTA members convene for their convention each year for educational workshops, information about current research on the efficacy of massage, association business meetings and a tradeshow. All massage therapists, massage therapy educators and students are welcome.