

Dear Mayor Breed,

Thank you and your team for your efforts to keep our city safe. You have shown the incredibly strong leadership we need during these uncertain times.

Your plans to reopen the city have come out, and I am concerned that Massage Therapy Establishments are not scheduled to open until mid-August. I completely understand the need to be safe, but my clients are hurting. My business is hurting. Five months is not a sustainable time to be without income for those of us who are self employed.

In addition, this comes on the heels of ordinances targeting human trafficking that negatively impacted our profession, in which we have already taken a big financial hit. The average massage therapist makes about 40k a year, and lives paycheck to paycheck. This is devastating to these small businesses (a majority of which are woman owned and operated) who just want to help people.

I am a female, minority small business owner, and a Board Certified sole practitioner of Structural Integration, a bodywork profession that is currently regulated under Massage in CA. (You can learn more about this profession at the International Association of Structural Integration website: <https://iasi.memberclicks.net/what-is-structural-integration->) and what my clients say about my work: [Plava Bodyworks](#) ) I have over 2000 hours of training including anatomy and physiology, and take my work very seriously. I use posture assessment, gait analysis, myofascial release, neuromuscular therapy, and neurovascular release to bring my clients back into balance and restore function. The work is focused, very similar to the manual portion of Physical Therapy, on restoring structure and function to clients. My practice is in a medical building in order to accommodate my clients with mobility issues. My client base consists of many people who are in pain, injured, or are recovering from surgery. Some have pinched nerves, debilitating migraines, and I have referrals from doctors, chiropractors, other healthcare providers, and provide treatment for worker's comp cases. Structural Integration offers my clients pain relief, better function and mobility, stress relief, as well as one on one human connection.

People often come as a last resort after trying multiple types of therapies. For some, these treatments are essential for them to stay mobile, reduce their pain medication, and improve their function and general well-being. It pains me greatly to hear of their suffering, and to be unable to help them. Not all need to come, but those who do, understand the risks involved. It is illogical that physical therapists have been able to continue to practice, yet people who practice bodywork are not allowed, and are lumped together with tattoo parlors and nail salons.

I am part of the SF Massage Community Council that has been working with the Office of Small Businesses and Supervisor Ronin to get massage zoned where healthcare is permitted. I am also the Law and Regulations chair for the International Association of Structural Integrators. Our team has deeply considered the risks of going back to our practices, and are working hard

to safely guide our practitioners as states open back up. Our work is healthcare, not a personal service, and we need to be able to provide for the people who need it.

As well as following CDC guidelines, I am preparing my practice by including but not limiting myself to the following protocols:

- seeing 4 or less people per day
- 30 mins between clients for sanitizing
- removal of magazines and tea station
- a Covid-19 informed questionnaire (in addition to an extensive health intake)
- Covid-19 education and signed acknowledgment of the risks involved
- posting of the city's educational signs
- not allowing people who are symptomatic to come in for treatment
- removal of shoes (which has been pre-Covid-19 policy)
- touchless temperature checks
- hand sanitizer upon entering the office (and anytime requested during treatment)
- well fitting masks for both myself and the clients at all times
- keeping conversation to a minimum
- providing a disinfect-able bin for personal items
- disinfecting high touch, common surfaces between clients
- plastic coverings for tables and pillows (under the linens which are changed between treatments)
- running a hepa air filter with UV with open windows at all times
- protective eyewear and gloves for myself
- securing loose hair
- installing a sink in my treatment room for quick hand washing access
- changing clothes/gown between sessions
- hands free trash cans
- implementing a UVC light sanitizer for the office

This comes from the guidance from the Federation of State Massage Therapy Boards.

<https://www.fsmtb.org/media/2319/fsmtb20200519guidelinesforpracticecovid-19.pdf>

The state of Washington has declared some types of massage therapy as essential and they have been back to work since the end of April. Here is the communication from the WA department of health:

<https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/1600/coronavirus/COVID19LMTRRecommendations.pdf>

If salons and barbershops are allowed to open here, then Massage Establishments (especially sole practitioners and those who deal with acute pain) should be allowed as well. Is our work

less important than a haircut? Or more risky? They are also touching their clients, near their faces, in close contact for 30-80 minutes and see many more clients per day than bodywork practitioners. Physical therapists and chiropractors also touch their clients for extended periods of time.

We are healthcare providers. We should have the choice to offer our work to the people who need it. To be frank, no situation will be completely risk free in the near future, but we can minimize risk with the implementation of safe and protective protocols. Some may wait until a later date to re-open their businesses, but it should be a choice for the therapist and their clients to make an informed decision. I believe the low volume, single person contact business, with proper safety measures in place, is less of a risk than the multiple contact points in many businesses now allowed to reopen.

I implore you to re-evaluate your opening strategy and allow massage establishments to reopen, by July 15th, with safety protocols and informed consent between therapist and client.

Thank you for your time, and for this tremendous undertaking, your hard work, and phenomenal job you and your teams have been doing for our city.

Be safe, and stay well.

Sincerely,

Christine Doo CMT, BCSI  
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