

## *An Active Release Technique Alternative for MSD Care*

Since OSHA's June 24, 2006, letter of interpretation regarding soft tissue massage and ART®, confusion has existed among health and safety professionals. Some have been led to believe ART® provides a unique non-recordable method to address discomfort and avoid Musculoskeletal Disorder (MSD) related injury claims. Some also have been led to believe if a physical therapist or certified athletic trainer provides massage, doing so is considered treatment and drives a recordable injury.

On May 23, 2019 OSHA provided a follow-up letter of interpretation to eliminate the confusion stating "... soft tissue massage is first aid whether or not such treatment is performed by individuals with ART® certification." The letter also stated "Even when these treatments are provided by a physician or other licensed health care professional, they are still considered first aid".

### **Why Does it Matter?**

Soft tissue massage, as one component of an Early Intervention program, can help an employer effectively address 90 - 95% of musculoskeletal discomfort without medical treatment and a recordable injury. The historic lack of competition and the perception of ART® having a unique non-recordable method to avoid musculoskeletal injuries has led to irrationally high hourly rates. The service is right but the pricing has been wrong.

### **What is Soft Tissue Massage?**

Soft tissue massage is an established standard of care to manage musculoskeletal discomfort. The practice relieves discomfort through mobilization of soft tissue. This intervention improves tissue mobility and blood flow, and decreases progression of the issue to a

recordable claim. Because this technique is included within the OSHA-defined first aid standard, it does not constitute medical care.

### **How is Atlas STM™ Different?**

First, our staff includes physical therapists, occupational therapists, and athletic trainers who are formally medically trained to assess the risk of the situation and correctly determine the proper course of action. They specialize in musculoskeletal issues and are able to decide if soft tissue massage or any first aid intervention is appropriate, or if an employee needs medical care.

Second, you have the option to use Atlas STM™ as either a stand-alone solution or as a component of our broader suite of Early Intervention services. Our staff is trained to not only provide care through massage, but also other first aid techniques. In addition, they can address the root cause of the concern through a workstation assessment, job coaching, and ergonomics. We can help you move beyond reactionary intervention to a proactive approach that prevents injuries.

### **Who Benefits?**

Any employee experiencing an increased awareness of heaviness, tightness, fatigue, or discomfort can benefit from Atlas STM™. The cause may be related to awkward positions, highly repetitive work, age-related degeneration, or overexertion. By providing first aid care early, progression is halted or slowed and medical treatment and recordability can be avoided.

### **Nationwide Network**

No matter where you work, Atlas is there. We have partnered with a select group of the best healthcare professionals across the country. Chances are there's an Atlas professional in your community.