



**Transmitted by electronic mail only:** [REDACTED]

August 12, 2021

ID#: I-054

[REDACTED]  
Campus President  
Fortis Institute  
201 Willowbrook Boulevard, 2nd Floor  
Wayne, NJ 07470

Dear [REDACTED]:

The Commission, at its July 2021 meeting, reviewed the accreditation record<sup>1</sup> of your institution's outcomes reporting. Based on review and discussion, the Commission acted to **withdraw** the Massage Therapy – Certificate program approval from the institution's grant of institutional accreditation. The reasons for the Commission's action are explained in detail below.

The institution is directed to submit to ABHES an **updated** Teach-Out Plan and the corresponding *Teach-Out Approval Form* for each program per Chapter III, Section A, Subsection 7.(i).1.i of the *Accreditation Manual*. Additionally, the institution must include in its submission evidence it has published notice **within seven business days** of the date of this letter that is readily available to enrolled and prospective students of the reason the Teach-Out Plan is being required.<sup>2</sup>

According to Chapter III, Section A, Subsection 10, failure to demonstrate at least a 70 percent placement and credentialing rate raises a question whether accreditation requirements are being met. An institution is required at minimum to demonstrate that it has effectively analyzed the situation and taken measures to correct the deficiency through creation of an action plan.

Furthermore, Chapter III, Section C, states the Commission may withdraw accreditation at any time if it determines that placement and credentialing rates fall below 70 percent. The Commission may at its discretion provide an opportunity for the institution or program to bring itself into compliance within a time period specified by the Commission. The findings of non-compliance for the Massage Therapy – Certificate program was first notified to the institution in the Commission's letter dated August 12, 2019.

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<sup>1</sup> The record includes the 2017-2018, 2018-2019, 2019-2020 Annual Reports, outcome reporting letters dated August 2019 and February 2020, the Commission's program specific warning letters dated August 2020 and February 2021, the institution's response to the letters, and any other relevant correspondence and documentation.

<sup>2</sup> This disclosure is also required under 34 Code of Federal Regulations § 668.43(a) (19) which states: "If the institution is required to maintain a teach-out plan by its accrediting agency, notice that the institution is required to maintain such teach-out plan and the reason that the accrediting agency required such plan under § 602.24(c)(1). . ."

According to our records, the following placement rates for the **Massage Therapy – Certificate** program have been reported to date:

- November 2018 – The institution reported a placement rate of 61% on its 2017-2018 Annual Report.
- May 2019 – The institution reported an updated placement rate of 61% for the 2017-2018 reporting year.
- October 2019 – The institution reported an updated placement rate of 67% for the 2017-2018 reporting year.
- November 2019 – The institution reported a placement rate of 50% on its 2018-2019 Annual Report.
- May 2020 – The institution reported an updated placement rate of 50% for the 2018-2019 reporting year.
- November 2020 – The institution reported an updated placement rate of 56% for the 2018-2019 reporting year.
- December 2020 – The institution reported a placement rate of 30% on its 2019-2020 Annual Report.
- May 2021 – The institution reported an updated placement rate of 33% for the 2019-2020 reporting year.

According to our records, the following credentialing rates for the **Massage Therapy – Certificate** program have been reported to date:

- November 2018 – The institution reported a credentialing rate of 13% on its 2017-2018 Annual Report.
- May 2019 – The institution reported an updated credentialing rate of 13% for the 2017-2018 reporting year.
- October 2019 – The institution reported an updated credentialing rate of 13% for the 2017-2018 reporting year.
- November 2019 – The institution reported a credentialing rate of 0% on its 2018-2019 Annual Report.
- May 2020 – The institution reported an updated credentialing rate of 10% for the 2018-2019 reporting year.
- November 2020 – The institution reported an updated credentialing rate of 10% for the 2018-2019 reporting year.
- December 2020 – The institution reported a credentialing rate of 33% on its 2019-2020 Annual Report.

- May 2021 – The institution reported an updated credentialing rate of 29% for the 2019-2020 reporting year.

The maximum period of time the Commission may allow for a program to be brought into compliance with ABHES requirements is stated in Chapter III, Section C of the *Accreditation Manual*. The institution was directed to demonstrate compliance within the maximum timeframe with its final response on November 1, 2020, for review at the Commission's January 2021 meeting. At that meeting, the Commission temporarily suspended maximum timeframe to provide flexibility to programs and institutions experiencing disruption due to the COVID-19 pandemic until its July 2021 meeting. As the findings above indicate, the institution failed to demonstrate compliance within the extended maximum timeframe for this program. Therefore, its approval has been withdrawn.

### **Appeal of Action & Submission Requirements**

The Commission's action to withdraw the program's approval is subject to appeal. Should the institution elect **not to appeal**, the decision to withdraw approval will be effective as of **August 23, 2021**, and the institution may not reapply to ABHES for approval of either program within one year from that date.

The institution should review carefully all procedures governing its appeal, in accordance with the procedures found in Chapter III, Section E, Subsection 3 of the *Accreditation Manual*. Note that the appeal must be based upon the information available to the Commission at the time of its action. Unless specifically provided for in Chapter III, Section E, Subsection 3, (f), the Appeals Panel has no authority to consider evidence outside of the record considered by the Commission at its July 2021 meeting. **The institution has the burden of demonstrating that the action of the Commission was not supported by the record or was otherwise erroneous.**

Should the institution elect to appeal the action of the Commission, it may do so by filing its intent to appeal the Commission action online via [DropBox Commission Responses](#) by **August 23, 2021**. It is imperative that the file is named, "ABHES ID#\_Intent\_to\_Appeal."

It is imperative that the file name must include ABHES ID#, RSP to Aug 2021, Approval Withdrawal – Intent to APPEAL, and date of submission (ex: I-100\_RSP to Aug 2021\_Withdrawal APPEAL Letter\_92021).

A \$5,000, non-refundable, appeal fee plus an Appeal Hearing expense deposit of \$10,000 for a total of \$15,000 must be remitted to ABHES with the statement of intent to appeal described above for receipt by **Monday, August 23, 2021**. Payment of fees are to be remitted electronically via bank transfer, or by credit card, where a 2.9% convenience fee is to be applied. Please contact the Accounting Department at [accounting@abhes.org](mailto:accounting@abhes.org) or (571) 282-0076 to obtain an invoice. The institution will be provided a summary of expenses following the appeal hearing and will be refunded or charged the difference from the \$10,000 deposit.

### **Written Statement of Grounds for Appeal**

Should the institution elect to appeal and has filed its intent and remitted payment as described above, the institution must then submit its appeal materials, consisting of a complete written statement of the grounds for its appeal based on the Commission's findings and reasons. **The materials must be submitted online via [DropBox Commission Responses](#) in accordance with the instructions for [Preparing Your Response](#) by September 27, 2021**, which is within 45 calendar days from the date of the Commission's written decision in this letter dated August 12, 2021.

**It is imperative that the file name include the ABHES ID#, RSP to Aug 2021 Approval Withdrawal Letter - APPEAL, and date of submission (ex: I-100 RSP to Aug 2021 Approval Withdrawal APPEAL Letter 92021).**

### **Teach-out Plan**

As a means of protecting current and future students, the **institution is directed to submit to ABHES under separate cover and not as part of the materials submitted with its appeal, an updated teach-out plan for each program**, and corresponding updated Teach-Out Approval Form (found under the Forms Tab on the ABHES website at <https://abhes.org/resources/#Forms>). The teach-out plan and Teach-Out Approval Form must be completed in accordance with applicable standards and requirements in Chapter III, Section A, Subsection 7 of the *Accreditation Manual* and submitted to ABHES no later than **August 23, 2021**.

### **Notifications**

The Commission's decision to withdraw the approval of the Massage Therapy – Certificate program will be published on the ABHES website as provided in Chapter III, Section E, Subsection 1 of the *Accreditation Manual*. Should ABHES receive a proper statement of intent to appeal, and payment as described above, it will modify its public notification of the negative action to indicate that the Commission's final action is under appeal. As provided in Chapter III, Section E, Subsection 1 of the *Accreditation Manual*, the program remains in accredited status during any pending appeal.

The U.S. Department of Education, the appropriate State licensing or authorizing agency, the appropriate accrediting agency, and the public have been notified of this action to withdraw the program's approval subject to appeal in compliance with 34 Code of Federal Regulations § 602.26 *et seq* and Chapter III of the *Accreditation Manual*.

If you have any questions concerning this correspondence, please feel free to contact me directly.

Sincerely,



India Y. Tips  
Executive Director

c: Herman Bounds, U.S. Department of Education  
Robert Grimmie, New Jersey Center for Occupational Employment Information  
Eric Taylor, New Jersey Office of the Secretary of Higher Education