



Registered Massage Therapists'
Association of Ontario

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March 18, 2020

John Tory
Mayor of Toronto
City Hall, 2nd Floor
100 Queen St. W.
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Dear Mr. Mayor:

The Registered Massage Therapists' Association of Ontario (RMTAO) is appreciative of the concern the City of Toronto has shown for workers and small business owners whose livelihoods have been impacted by the COVID-19 crisis. There are 14,000 Registered Massage Therapists (RMTs) across Ontario, the majority of whom are self-employed. Nearly half of our members practice in the Greater Toronto Area.

The RMTAO fully supports all containment measures that have been put in place at the municipal, provincial, and federal level to stop the spread of COVID-19, and recognizes that they are an essential step to ensuring public health. Unfortunately, these measures are also resulting in extreme financial hardship for our self-employed members, many of whom do not have access to Employment Insurance.

The RMTAO appreciates the initiatives that have already been announced by the Mayor to mitigate the economic impact of this crisis on self-employed workers and small businesses, such as the extended grace period for property tax and utility bill payments, the creation of a contingency fund to support businesses in the city, and the expansion of the city's small business advisory services. The RMTAO understands that the Mayor intends to hold consultations with representatives from various sectors that have been impacted by this crisis. We would very much appreciate being included in these consultations, in order to ensure that the needs of our members are being met during this crisis.

RMTs play a vital role in providing health services. They assist with rehabilitation, improve the quality of life of the elderly and alleviate the physical symptoms of depression, stress and anxiety. RMTs help people relieve their musculoskeletal pain so they can remain at work longer and continue to enjoy the activities that they love. Massage therapy has also been recognized as a potential non-drug alternative to opioids in the treatment of chronic pain. While many of these essential services will have to be suspended during this pandemic, any support you can offer RMTs will ensure that these services resume as quickly and effectively as possible once the worst of this situation has passed.

The RMTAO would appreciate receiving information from the Mayor that we can share with our members in the City of Toronto that will assist in helping them cope financially with this

unprecedented crisis. As mentioned, we are also interested in providing further input or otherwise assisting in the City's efforts in responding to the crisis, especially measures that affect RMTs and their patients. We are similarly interested in measures that affect all self-employed individuals and small business owners.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Feraday". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "M" and a long, sweeping underline.

Michael Feraday
Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer
Registered Massage Therapists' Association of Ontario