



Registered Massage Therapists'
Association of Ontario

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March 17, 2020

The Honourable Doug Ford, MPP
Premier of Ontario
Legislative Building
Queen's Park
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1

Dear Premier:

The Registered Massage Therapists' Association of Ontario (RMTAO) is concerned that the Provincial Government's response to the COVID 19 crisis does not do enough to mitigate the devastating economic impact of this emergency on Registered Massage Therapists (RMTs) in Ontario.

There are over 14,000 RMTs in Ontario, the overwhelming majority of whom are self-employed. The recent containment efforts announced by the Government of Ontario and the College of Massage Therapists of Ontario, which the RMTAO supports as an essential step in ensuring public health, are also resulting in extreme financial hardship to our self-employed members, many of whom do not have access to Employment Insurance. Most of our members are ineligible for the initiatives announced by the Government to support employees in Ontario.

The RMTAO urges the Premier to consider initiatives that will assist RMTs and all self-employed individuals and small business owners in Ontario in their ability to feed their families, pay their rent or mortgages and pay their taxes.

RMTs in Ontario play a vital role in providing health services to Ontarians and deliver important services that assist in rehabilitation, improve the quality of life for 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 that benefit the health of Ontarians will have to be suspended during this pandemic, any financial support you can offer RMTs will ensure that these services can resume as quickly and effectively as possible once the worst of this situation has passed.

The RMTAO would appreciate receiving information from the Premier that we can share with our members that will assist in helping them cope financially with this unprecedented crisis. We are also interested in providing further input or otherwise assisting in the Government'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 in the Province.

Yours sincerely,

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

CC: Andrea Horwath, Leader, Official Opposition
Steven Del Duca, Leader, Ontario Liberal Party
Mike Schreiner, Leader, Green Party of Ontario
Hon. Rod Phillips, Minister of Finance
Hon. Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health and Long-Term Care
Hon. Monte McNaughton, Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development
Stan Cho, Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Finance
Robin Martin, Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care
David Corbett, Deputy Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development