



Registered Massage Therapists'
Association of Ontario

1243 Islington Avenue, Suite 704
Toronto, Ontario M8X 1Y9

Tel 416.979.2010
Toll Free 1.800.668.2022
Fax 416.979.1144

RMTAO.com
RMTFind.com

May 1, 2020

Hon. Christine Elliott
Deputy Premier and Minister of Health and Long-Term Care
Ministry of Health
5th Floor
777 Bay St.
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 2J3

Dear Minister Elliot:

The Registered Massage Therapists' Association of Ontario (RMTAO) is appreciative of the many initiatives of the Government of Ontario to mitigate the devastating impact of the COVID-19 crisis and welcome the recently announced framework to re-open the Province. The RMTAO represents 14,000 Registered Massage Therapists (RMTs) across Ontario. As regulated health professionals, our members want to do their part to support Ontarians in quickly and safely returning to normalcy, including a return to their normal access to health care.

We are advocating that our profession be part of the first stage of the staged approach to reopen the province, which we believe should include all other regulated health professionals, taking as many precautions as possible. We feel that early access to regulated health professionals will assist in the recovery of Ontarians and Ontario.

RMTs play a vital role in providing health services to Ontarians. They assist with rehabilitation, and alleviate the physical symptoms of depression, stress and anxiety. RMTs help people relieve their musculoskeletal pain so they can remain at work longer, continue to enjoy the activities that they love and in some cases avoid further medical care from doctors or hospitals. Massage therapy has also been recognized as a potential non-drug alternative to opioids in the treatment of chronic pain.

Many of our members support clients with essential and, in some cases, urgent care, and these clients have been without access to our support for seven weeks. Massage therapists are able to treat both chronic and acute injuries and conditions, including offering post-surgical support and support to people managing potentially debilitating symptoms of chronic conditions. For example, one of our members indicated that a patient of hers was unable to receive his regular lymphatic drainage massage as part of his lymphedema treatment and this has resulted in a bacterial infection (cellulitis) in the leg, which resulted in this individual seeking treatment from a hospital emergency room.

We are also concerned about the long-term effects of social isolation and prolonged stress on Ontarians. We feel that RMTs have an important role to play in providing relief to the physical symptoms associated with stress, anxiety and depression, which can be especially crucial for frontline workers. Studies have indicated that massage therapy can be beneficial for front line workers to reduce stress, promote mental health, and improve the quality of their working lives, which is incredibly important during these times.


Our Association has committed to work closely with the regulatory body, the College of Massage Therapists of Ontario (CMTO), to ensure that our members are prepared and equipped to safely

resume the important care they provide to their patients. To that end, we will be releasing training modules, guidelines, protocols and other supports that facilitate:

1. Screening
2. Hand Hygiene and the use of PPE
3. Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection
4. Physical Distancing where possible
5. Exclusion or Work Restrictions during Illness

The RMTAO is asking that RMTs be included in the first stage of reopening Ontario so that we are able to provide the healthcare needed by so many Ontarians. We would also appreciate receiving information from the Ministry that we can share with our members that will assist in the recovery from 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.

Yours sincerely,



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

CC: The Honourable Doug Ford, MPP
Andrea Horwath, Leader, Official Opposition
Steven Del Duca, Leader, Ontario Liberal Party
Mike Schreiner, Leader, Green Party of Ontario
Helen Angus Deputy Minister Ministry of Health
Dr. David Williams Chief Medical Officer of Health Ministry of Health
Hon. Rod Phillips, Minister of Finance
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