



Registered Massage Therapists'
Association of Ontario

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May 28, 2021

The Honourable Ross Romano
Minister of Colleges and Universities
5th Floor
438 University Avenue
Toronto, Ontario
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Regarding: Your memorandum of December 4, 2020 to Presidents, Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology – In-Person Capacity Limits for Postsecondary Education Institutions

Dear Minister:

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.

Recently the above referenced memorandum was brought to my attention. In your memorandum, you omitted Registered Massage Therapists in your list of prescribed programs that support the healthcare workforce. From our perspective and the perspective of our members, this was a significant omission.

Registered Massage Therapists are one of 26 Regulated Health Professions in Ontario. As a regulated health profession, we adhere to the highest standard for healthcare professionals. We are also playing a significant role in supporting healthcare professionals and society with the effects of the current pandemic. Our services and our profession have never been more essential to Ontarians.

The RMTAO advocates 14,000 Registered Massage Therapists (RMTs) across Ontario. We have over 6,000 members. 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 patients with essential rehabilitative care. 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.

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. Studies have indicated that massage therapy can be beneficial to reduce stress, promote mental health, and improve the quality of their working lives, which is incredibly important during these times. This essential service can only be provided if there are enough students graduating in a timely manner as per other health care practitioners included on your list. Not being included on your list jeopardizes this.

It is essential that massage therapy students are able to continue in their program with the same in person capacity afforded to other regulated health care professionals like physiotherapists. This is the only way we can ensure the number of graduates required to meet the growing essential demand of Ontarians. The RMTAO is asking that you incorporate massage therapy in your list either separately or as part of Rehabilitation Sciences.

Yours sincerely,



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

CC:

Ari Laskin, Chief of Staff
Shelley Tapp, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Colleges and Universities
Dr, David Williams, Chief Medical Officer of Health
Tamara Gilbert, Assistant Deputy Minister, Advanced Education Learner Supports Division
Kelly Shields, Assistant Deputy Minister, Postsecondary Education Division
Travis Coulter, [Director &](#) Superintendent, Private Career Colleges Branch
Ivonne Mellozi, Postsecondary Accountability Branch
Barry McCartan, Director, Indigenous Education Branch