



Registered Massage Therapists'
Association of Ontario

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March 18, 2021

The Honourable Doug Ford, MPP
Premier of Ontario
Legislative Building
Queens Park
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 1A1

Dear Premier:

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.

We support Ontario's COVID-19 vaccination plan developed by the Ministry of Health. However, our members are concerned with comments made by you at press conferences this week that seemed to contradict the plan. The medical experts who worked on the plan have determined that it is essential for front line health care workers to be vaccinated early. The high levels of contact with patients and the importance of continuing to provide health care to Ontarians make this critically important.

Registered Massage Therapists are just one of 26 Regulated Health Professions in Ontario that are included in this stage of the vaccination plan along with other high priority groups like people over 80.

The RMTAO advocates on behalf of 14,000 Registered Massage Therapists (RMTs) across Ontario. We have over 6,000 members. As regulated health professionals, our members want to do their part to support Ontarians in quickly and safely returning to normalcy.

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 been recognized as a potential non-drug alternative to opioids in the treatment of chronic pain.

Many of our members support seniors with essential and, in some cases, urgent care, and these patients have had limited access to our support for an extended period. 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 that affect many seniors.

We help Ontarians alleviate the effects of social isolation and prolonged stress caused by the pandemic. Studies have indicated that massage therapy can be beneficial to reduce stress, promote mental health, and improve the quality of life, which is incredibly important during these times.

The RMTAO is asking that the Premier respond reinforcing his support of Ontario's COVID-19 vaccination plan developed by the Ministry of Health. A public response from you would also be appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Feraday", is centered within a light gray rectangular background.

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

CC:

Hon. Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health and Long-Term Care
Robin Martin, Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care
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