



Registered Massage Therapists'
Association of Ontario

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June 4, 2020

Hon. Bill Morneau, PC, MP
Minister of Finance
Finance Canada
90 Elgin Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0G5

Dear Minister Morneau:

The Registered Massage Therapists' Association of Ontario (RMTAO) is appreciative of the many initiatives the Government of Canada has introduced to mitigate the devastating economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on small businesses and self-employed individuals. The RMTAO has over 6,500 members and there are 14,000 Registered Massage Therapists (RMTs) across Ontario, the overwhelming majority of whom are self-employed. We also recognize and support the many thousands of self-employed RMTs Canada-wide who are represented by our counterparts in each province.

The RMTAO welcomes the recent announcements from the federal government to extend the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy to August 29, 2020, as well as expanding it to include people paid by methods other than salaries, allowing it to apply to more RMTs. Recently the Ontario Government allowed Registered Massage Therapists to return to work, as long as they follow all guidance from their regulator, the College of Massage Therapists' of Ontario (CMTO), as well as public health authorities to keep themselves and their patients safe. While RMTs in Ontario are looking forward to seeing their patients, there are many reasons why they may be unable to practice safely. For example, they may be at increased risk from COVID-19, may have family members that are at increased risk, or may work primarily with a population at increased risk e.g. seniors. This presents a challenge to many RMTs who choose not to return to work due to their increased personal risk, and will not be eligible for the CERB as a result. The RMTAO would ask the Minister to extend access to the CERB for RMTs and all other Canadians who feel that the risk posed by returning to work right now is too great for themselves and their families. We ask the government to continue doing all they can to protect and support those who are most vulnerable to COVID-19.

RMTs play a vital role in providing health services to Canadians. 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 can now gradually resume, any financial support you can offer to those RMTs who continue to delay their return for a variety of reasons will help ensure that they can have a business to return to once the worst of this situation has passed.

The RMTAO would appreciate receiving information from the Minister 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.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Feraday', written in a cursive style.

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

CC: Hon. Andrew Scheer, PC, MP, Leader of the Official Opposition;
Jagmeet Singh, MP, Leader, New Democratic Party;
Jo-Ann Roberts, Interim Leader, Green Party of Ontario;
Hon. Chrystia Freeland PC, MP, Deputy Prime Minister of Canada and Minister of
Intergovernmental Affairs;
Hon. Mary Ng, PC, MP, Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion, and International
Trade;
Hon. Navdeep Bains, PC, MP, Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry