



Friday, Sept. 25, 2020

The Honourable Doug Ford, Premier
Premier's Office
Room 281
Legislative Building, Queen's Park
Toronto, ON
M7A 1A1

Dear Premier,

Yesterday, the Ontario Hospital Association (OHA), along with 38 health care leaders and physicians serving largely in hospitals across Ontario, issued a statement asking for stricter public health measures in order to limit escalating transmission of COVID-19. On behalf of the community mental health and addictions sector, we are writing you to express our support of the OHA's statement.

Specifically, the letter called for restrictions on non-essential businesses and activities that facilitate social gatherings and increase opportunities for exposure, including dine-in restaurants and bars, nightclubs, gyms, theatres, and places of worship. The letter also asked the province to ask non-essential businesses to have employees work from home and instruct universities and colleges to offer classes online, wherever possible.

Earlier this week, the Public Health Agency of Canada released very concerning modeling of a second wave exponentially higher than the first. The measures recommended above, implemented now and where needed, regionally, are essential in helping to reduce reaching those levels.

Ontario's mental health and addiction leaders are critically concerned about the impact that COVID-19 has already had on the mental and emotional well-being of Ontarians, as well as the trauma that those on the front line of care and who have lost loved ones have endured. Already a system of services under strain, collectively we are sounding the alarm that unless we take action to bend the curve of a second wave now, we will not be ready to provide the care that those impacted would need.

These are specific and actionable measures. Combined with yesterday's federal government announcement to extend income supports for people impacted financially by COVID-19 measures, they are the best immediate actions to reduce the devastating impact that we could see with a second wave.

Measures like those referenced above are the best chance we have to protect the continued availability of our health care services and public primary and secondary education. We believe the mental and emotional well-being of Ontarians are at risk with the current rise in COVID-19 cases. We need the government to heed this advice, today.

For the benefit of all Ontarians, we respectfully ask you to consider this request as we represent the most vulnerable among us, those struggling with their mental health and addictions, including children and youth.

Sincerely,



Adrienne Spafford
Chief Executive Officer
Addictions and Mental Health Ontario



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Camille Quenneville
Chief Executive Officer
Canadian Mental Health Association, Ontario Division



Canadian Mental
Health Association
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Kim Moran
Chief Executive Officer
Children's Mental Health Ontario



Cc: Anthony Dale, President & CEO, Ontario Hospital Association;
Board of Directors, Addictions Mental Health Ontario;
Board of Directors, Canadian Mental Health Association, Ontario Division;
Board of Directors, Children's Mental Health Ontario