



March 23, 2020

**Re: Essential Community Mental Health and Addictions Services and COVID-19 Response**

Dear Premier Ford, Minister Elliott and Minister Tibollo,

On behalf of Ontario's community mental health and addictions sector, we welcome your recently announced measures to further bolster the province's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Thank you all for your leadership as we navigate these unprecedented times together.

**Mental health and addictions services, including community-based adult and child and youth mental health, are essential and should continue to be provided through this period.** Services such as supervised consumption, crisis response, residential and live-in treatment, intensive treatment supports, withdrawal management, supportive housing and other critical services must continue to operate through this pandemic. It's critical that Ontarians can continue to receive the often life-saving treatment they need in the community, both for their own wellbeing but also to ensure we are not adding additional pressures on our hospitals at this time. We would be pleased to work with Ministry officials on further details of essential programs and how they can operate while doing our part to limit the spread of COVID-19.

Additionally, many community mental health and addictions providers are multi-service agencies that provide other essential programs for vulnerable populations such as those experiencing homelessness, food insecurity and young parents, and these are critical to continue as well. We are reaching out to your colleagues at the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services to relay this urgent message.

We look forward to continuing to work with your teams to ensure essential services in community mental health and addictions can continue to support the wellbeing of Ontarians and the health of our communities.

Sincerely,

Kim Moran, CEO, Children's Mental Health Ontario  
Adrienne Spafford, CEO, Addictions and Mental Health Ontario  
Camille Quenneville, CEO, Canadian Mental Health Association, Ontario

cc. Rana Shagoon, Director, Health Policy, Office of the Premier  
Laurel Brazill, Director of Stakeholder Relations, Minister of Health  
Harpreet Bassi, Director of Policy, Minister of Health  
Kara Johnson, Director, Stakeholder Relations and Operations, Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions