



Canadian Massage
Therapist Alliance

Alliance Canadienne
de Massothérapeutes

May 26, 2020

Hon. Bill Morneau P.C. M.P.
Minister of Finance
Finance Canada
90 Elgin Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0G5

Dear Minister Morneau,

The Canadian Massage Therapist Alliance (CMTA) welcomes the recent announcements from the federal government to extend the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy to August 29, 2020 and expand the Canada Emergency Business Account.

The CMTA is a nationwide alliance comprised of provincial professional associations to provide a forum for collaboration to advance massage therapy as a health care profession in Canada. Officially constituted in 1991, the CMTA works co-cooperatively to promote massage therapy as a component of the Canadian health care system, and to ensure the highest standards in providing massage therapy to the public.

Over the last few months, we have seen first-hand how the pandemic has disrupted professional health services. The vast majority of our members have been forced to stop working or lay off staff. In fact, many of our members are either small-business owners or self-employed and have relied heavily on the emergency response benefits put forward by your government to stay afloat.

We wish to underscore that since the pandemic hit, the government has demonstrated openness and flexibility to the small business community and self-employed workers by adapting programs along the way. An extended and simplified wage subsidy, financing measures for small businesses through the Business Credit Availability Bank, and allowing self-employed massage therapists who earn less than \$1,000 to receive the Canada Emergency Response Benefit, are important measures in helping Canadian businesses get back to health and will provide major relief to our sector as we enter the recovery phase.

That said, as provinces begin to slowly re-open, our profession will need on-going support. For our members who are allowed and able to return to practice, we wish to underscore that in order to respect public health measures, they will only be able to welcome patients on a part-time basis in the foreseeable future, leaving many of them to wonder if reopening and recalling laid-off workers will even be financially possible. For others who practice in some of the hardest hit provinces, reopening and return to practice remain weeks if not months away. When they are eventually able to begin to practice again, they will face similar challenges to what our colleagues in already reopening provinces are facing currently.

As a first and immediate step, CMTA respectfully recommends the federal government expand the Canada Emergency Response Benefit beyond June 6th so that message therapists who are unable to return, or do so safely, to work in their home provinces in the weeks and months ahead or fail to earn more than \$1,000 as self-employed professional health providers during the re-opening phase of the economy continue to receive the support they need.

CMTA also recommends the federal government expand the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy until the economic effects of COVID-19 have dissipated and until small businesses can confidently operate at full capacity. Furthermore, as we begin to partially re-open, we recommend the federal government reduce the 30% drop in gross revenue threshold in order to qualify for the program. This will give our members peace of mind throughout the coming months.

As a national alliance, we stand ready to work with all levels of government and the Canadian health care system to ensure the highest standards in providing message therapy to the public through the upcoming reopen phase.

Sincerely,

Krystin Bokalo
Chair, Canadian Massage Therapist Alliance

CC: Hon. Mary Ng P.C. M.P., Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion, and International Trade
Hon. Navdeep Bains P.C. M.P., Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry