

May 28, 2020

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

Dear Premier,

On behalf of the profession of occupational therapy in Ontario, I am writing to share our disappointment in the decision of the Ministry of Health regarding the potential to share the recognition implied by the pandemic payment initiative equitably to all health care workers who are engaged directly in supporting the province's management of the COVID-19 pandemic. We received Assistant Deputy Minister Helen Angus' memorandum communicating this decision last evening.

While we understand the decision to not extend the \$4 per hour pay adjustment beyond previously identified eligible workers was influenced by fiscal pressures, we know that communication of this decision will be devastating to our members who are working alongside colleagues who share the same risks and demands and will be receiving the payment.

Over and over, we have heard from occupational therapists and occupational therapist assistants that the government's oversight of occupational therapy and other allied health professions integrally involved on the frontline of COVID-19 services in the list of eligible workers, has left them feeling unrecognized and under-valued. This, perhaps even more than the lack of fiscal reward, has devastated morale and sadly has disrupted the ever important interprofessional relationships so critical to excellence in healthcare.

*I am writing to request your commitment to right this wrong.* We continue to advocate for reconsideration of the pandemic payment initiative. At very least, we ask that you commit to alternative strategies to formally recognize the contributions of *all* workers contributing to your government's frontline efforts, whether in hospitals or in the community. Your army of hardworking public servants deserve to hear their professions named and promoted to the public in a meaningful way. While we have great respect for those workers named for pandemic pay, we believe you need to help correct the public perception that you have perpetuated that these are the only deserving heroes of our pandemic effort.

The Society is most willing to support you in any efforts to address our request and I am pleased to be contacted in this regard,

Sincerely,



Christie Brenchley, OT Reg. (Ont.)  
Executive Director

cc. The Honourable Christine Elliott, Minister of Health

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