



March 18, 2021

The Honourable Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario
Queen's Park, Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1A2

Dear Premier Ford,

Re: COVID-19 Framework

We understand the heavy responsibility of your government in mitigating the rising cases of COVID and the variants in Ontario. We are in this fight with you as we consistently implore our community residents, employees, and business leaders to adhere to the public health recommendations even as we begin the roll out of the vaccine. We concur that measures must be enacted to reduce the risk of spread and appreciate the framework designed with the intention to provide evidenced based decision making and engage communities in their own solutions.

This last year has taught us all that public health, the economy and mental wellness must be part of the same conversation as we deal with COVID and as we plan for rebound. We have been working closely with your government and our business leaders to ensure that businesses who have borne the brunt of the pandemic have what they need to survive. However, no one could have predicted how long it would take to get to the other side.

We know that all businesses are essential to our overall community health. Therefore, **we are calling on you to revise the framework to address inconsistencies, provide equal opportunity to all businesses and ensure the elimination of unintended consequences. This is an urgent matter.**

Business and consumer confidence is depleting quickly. We need to maintain their trust and cooperation as they fight to keep their businesses open. **Our immediate ask as Ottawa enters the Red Zone in the framework is to change from hard caps to percentage of capacity in service areas for all businesses regardless of sector. This supports the physical distancing mandate. In addition, ensure the percentage of capacity is equal for all businesses. The spread of the virus does not change depending on whether you are at a supermarket or hardware store.**

Finally, we have consistently called upon you to **give adequate notice to businesses when there is a status change** that affects them. Your agreement and adherence to this protocol demonstrates an appreciation for the operational challenges and financial impacts they face when forced to follow new regulations virtually overnight.

We will continue to work with your government and support our businesses as we act together to get from here to there by providing information for decision making and encouraging the use of safety protocols. We welcome an opportunity to discuss this matter further in a brief meeting at your earliest convenience.

We remain in your service.

Sincerely,



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Hon. Michael Tibollo, Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions
Dr. David Williams, Chief Medical Officer of Health, Ontario