



Canadian Cancer Society
Société canadienne du cancer

BREATHE the lung association
RESPIREZ l'association pulmonaire



May 7, 2020

Hon. Christine Elliott
Minister of Health
5th floor, 777 Bay Street
Toronto, Ontario

Dear Minister Elliott:

As representatives of Ontario's charitable health sector, we are writing to you with an urgent appeal for a stabilization fund for the province's nonprofit organizations. The COVID-19 pandemic has posed a fundamental threat to our continued ability to fundraise successfully and therefore, to deliver on our core missions to invest in research, provide supports and services to our constituents across the province and to engage in health promotion education to reduce the risks of the diseases and conditions we are committed to fight. The survival of our organizations is at stake.

This is at a time when the evidence is mounting that the individuals affected by many of these diseases and conditions are at increased risk of COVID-19 infection or of more severe outcomes if infected. The demand for our services is increasing and the education, resources, supports and services that we provide to these vulnerable Ontarians is more critical now than ever before.

Beyond the urgent need for our programs, our sector represents a significant part of Ontario's economy. One third of the country's nonprofit organizations are based in Ontario, with 1 million employees and an economic contribution of \$50 billion to the province's GDP. Those jobs and the economic contribution our organizations make to the province are already being lost.

Many of our organizations have already been forced to lay off significant numbers of employees – up to 70 percent in some cases. Even if we qualify, the federal government's emergency wage subsidy does not come close to making up for the shortfall in fundraising revenue. The recent announcement of the federal Emergency Community Support Fund will alleviate some of the pressure on organizations delivering frontline services, but it is a drop in the bucket in comparison to the immense revenue losses we have, and will continue to, experience.

What the charitable sector in Ontario requires is broad-based support that will ensure our survival and the ability to support Ontarians as we begin to recover from this pandemic. As health charities in Ontario, we recommend the following measures:

- A non-profit sector stabilization fund that is adequate to address the urgent needs of the non-profit sector as an employer of one million Ontarians

- Program funding for organizations, such as ours, which provide peer support, information services, and psychosocial support for people from vulnerable populations, such as those with chronic illness and conditions and their caregivers
- Ensure the Ontario-Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance Program works for non-profits and charities renting properties in Ontario and provide additional assistance to offset overhead costs of transitioning staff to work from home
- Double the provincial portion of the Charitable Donation Tax Credit through to the end of 2021 and make the credit refundable so charitable contributions are treated the same as a contribution to a political party in Ontario
- Commit to matching donations from all Ontarians to provincial charities or national charities with provincial offices

We believe your government has an important role to play in supporting our organizations, particularly as the programs and services we deliver through donations help to reduce the burden placed on the health care system funded by the province. Support from the Government of Canada has been a start, but it has simply not gone far enough. Without help, Ontarians will feel the pain of the loss of our organizations for years to come, a scenario that has become all too likely over the last number of weeks.

This is an unprecedented crisis, and our organizations are responding in unprecedented ways. But we need your help. Representatives from our coalition will be following up with your office in the coming days to discuss how we may support your efforts to stabilize our sector.

Best regards,



Jeff Cornett
Executive Director, Ontario
Canadian Cancer Society



Terry Dean
President and CEO
Canadian Lung Association



Jake Reid
National Director, Government Relations
Diabetes Canada



Avril Goffredo
Executive Vice President, Ontario and Nunavut
Heart & Stroke

Endorsers:



Hemophilia Ontario



c.c: Hon. Doug Ford, Premier
Members, Ontario Jobs and Recovery Committee