

January 5, 2022

The Honourable Prabmeet Sarkaria
President of the Treasury Board
Rm 4320, 99 Wellesley St W,
Toronto, ON M7A 1W3

Dear Minister Sarkaria,

We are writing to you on behalf of Community Health Ontario (CHO) and the many community-based health care providers from across the province that CHO represents. With the current spread of Omicron and further COVID-19 restrictions now in place in the province, our collective organizations are very concerned about barriers to providing the high-quality health care services Ontarians deserve, at the volumes they need.

This concern stems from two separate but interrelated issues facing organizations that deliver community-based health care: the lack of significant base budget increases in an environment with unprecedented inflationary pressure and increasing service demand, and the existence of Bill 124, which caps increases to both salary rates and to existing or new compensation requirements at 1% per year. These issues exacerbate the current health human resource shortages our collective sectors are currently facing.

As you know, CHO is comprised of Addictions and Mental Health Ontario, Children's Mental Health Ontario, the Canadian Mental Health Association Ontario Division, the Ontario Community Support Association, the Alliance for Healthier Communities, and AdvantAge Ontario. Together, we represent the vast majority of community-based health care in the province of Ontario. With Omicron here, CHO is urging the provincial government to:

- 1) **Provide base budget increases of 7-8% to all community-based health care providers in the province** in order to provide front-line organizations with the funding necessary to address the health care needs of Ontarians during the Omicron wave and beyond.
- 2) **Immediately repeal and replace Bill 124** with more targeted legislation, so that community-based health care organizations can offer compensation packages that make it possible to attract and retain critical health human resources.

Together, these measures will help protect Ontario's critical community health infrastructure through the current wave. Hospital funding has far exceeded funding for community-based providers over the past number of years, which hurts our members' ability to provide much needed care. A lack of base funding, along with limitations imposed by Bill 124, significantly hampers service delivery. The provincial government has the opportunity to act now to preserve these vital health care services.

CHO appreciates the government's leadership during this difficult time. If you would like to discuss our requests in greater detail, we would welcome the opportunity to meet with you and

your team to explore these issues further. You can contact us through Camille Quenneville at cquenneville@ontario.cmha.ca or by telephone at 416-920-1355.

Sincerely,

Katie Heelis

Katie Heelis
Interim CEO
Addictions and Mental Health Ontario



Mary Kloosterman

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Interim CEO
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Camille Quenneville

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Sarah Hobbs

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Deborah Simon
CEO
Ontario Community Support Association



Lisa Levin
CEO
AdvantAge Ontario



CC. The Honourable Christine Elliott, Minister of Health
The Honourable Michael Tibollo, Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions