



COLLEGE OF CHIROPODISTS OF ONTARIO

Regulating Chiropodists and Podiatrists in Ontario

April 29, 2020

Ministry of Health
5th Floor
777 Bay St.
Toronto, ON
M7A 2J3
christine.elliott@pc.ola.org

Dear Minister Elliott

Re: Access to Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for Community-Based Treatment

The College of Chiropodists of Ontario fully appreciates the extraordinary times created by the COVID-19 pandemic and the enormous amount of work that you and your staff and the government is undertaking.

As you are aware, regulated health professionals, including Chiropodists and Podiatrists, are deemed essential workers. Chiropodists and Podiatrists work in a variety of settings with over 80% in community-based private practice. Community-based care is of vital importance to ensure that people are not having to attend hospitals to be treated. This care ensures that seniors and those with complex co-morbidities, including diabetes, rheumatic disease and vascular disease obtain the necessary treatment to prevent serious complications which can include ulceration and amputation

Due to the crisis, our members are limiting their practice to treating patients who require urgent care. Appropriate PPE is essential for standard infection control procedures across all healthcare settings, including those within community based private practices. The College has produced and revised multiple guidance documents for our members around risk assessment and Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) including rationalized and extended use of PPE based on Public Health Ontario recommendations.

The College recently undertook a survey of members and found that access to PPE was the major concern (attachment). Most members have been unable to secure replacement PPE and over 50% of Clinics are fully closed. Regrettably as time progresses, more and more patients whose conditions are currently not urgent, will indeed require urgent care. Members are concerned that they will not have access to appropriate PPE in order to safely fulfil their professional

obligations to their patients. Our standards require use of PPE to safely perform procedures and of course it is necessary in this Pandemic to protect our patients as well as our members from the risk of spreading the virus. This would be extremely damaging to the public's health and lead to extra pressures on our health system.

At meetings with the Health Profession Regulators of Ontario (HPRO) it was identified that many Colleges are concerned about current access to PPE by registrants in the community and when some restrictions are reduced. We are aware that similar issues have also been raised by the Canadian Medical Association, Ontario Medical Association and Ontario Dental Association.

The College fully recognizes the Government's need to focus upon critical front-line staff within Hospitals, and Long-Term Care facilities. Indeed, we have members who are working in these locations. We urge you to not overlook those Chiropractors, Podiatrists and other healthcare workers in the community working to reduce the pressure on the healthcare system. As Ontario implements its phased plan to lift the restrictions, the backlogged demand for care and required alterations in IPAC will place a huge demand on community-based care. We will be unable to meet this demand unless the required PPE is made accessible.

We look forward to hearing how you will continue to support all our members and other healthcare providers and our ability to access the PPE they require.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Martin Hayles". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Martin Hayles
President
College of Chiropractors of Ontario

Cc
Ms. Helen Angus
Health Profession Regulators of Ontario