

## COVID 19 & Massage Therapy Update

First of all we would like to thank all our valued clients for their patience and support over the last two months. These have been confusing times and we would like to clarify as much as we can about the announcement made this week and how it pertains to the Massage Therapists.

On Wednesday, May 27th the Ontario Government and the Ontario Chief Medical Officer of Health have provided a new directive for Regulated Health Professionals that allow for a **gradual** restart of services to be carried out with adherence to guidance from each health profession's regulatory college. The directive includes Registered Massage Therapists (RMTs) under the guidance of our College of Massage Therapists of Ontario (CMTO). We want to clarify that this announcement was a general statement which means not all Regulated Health Professionals will be opening at the same time or at the same rate (or at all, for now).

At this time our College, the CMTO, is not expecting RMTs to return to practice if they do not feel it is appropriate or safe to do so. **The CMTO also encourages limiting the number of in-person visits by prioritizing clients with essential care needs.** Treatment is considered essential when: the client's overall health or function would considerably decline if treatment were not provided (i.e. lead to hospitalization or other serious health consequences). Our first priority as Massage Therapists is to the health and safety of ourselves, our families and our clients and to ensure that the benefits of treatment outweigh the risks. Although there are benefits to massage therapy treatments, many of our treatments are for wellness and/or maintenance and therefore are not an essential healthcare treatment at this time due to the risks still present for COVID-19. We ask that only those who are experiencing acute pain or have suffered an injury make appointments at this time.

Our State of Emergency has also been extended in Ontario to June 9th and social distancing is still in effect which we will be continuing to follow. We will update clients further when each of us foresees a potential date to begin taking on clients. We have just begun to receive direction on practices and procedure guidelines that will need to be put in place before we can return safely. These include, but are not limited to, the pre-screening of clients before every treatment, increased frequency of handwashing & cleaning practices, increased signage, documentation and record keeping of practices, the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) such as face masks for myself and clients and additional health & safety training. We will also require more time between clients to complete these protocols and as such we will have limited spots available for treatment.

Please remain patient as implementation of these guidelines and the obtaining of sufficient PPE due to shortages can be a lengthy process. As stated before the health & safety of ourselves, our family and all of our clients is our top priority. We will only return to practice when we feel it safe to do so and will keep everyone posted.

Thank you again for all of your support during this time. We hope everyone remains safe & healthy!

Sincerely,

The RMT's at Laurelwood ☺