

January 28, 2020

Hon. Christine Elliott
Ministry of Health
5th Floor, 777 Bay St.
Toronto, ON M7A 2J3

Dear Minister:

On behalf of the 1800 members of Therapeutic Recreation Ontario (TRO), I am writing to recognize the passing of Bill 116, and in particular the Mental Health and Addictions Centre of Excellence Act, 2019.

Therapeutic Recreation (TR) recognizes that good mental health is integral to a person's overall health. It is a strengths-based profession that contributes to recovery from mental illness. As members of the interdisciplinary professional health team, Recreation Therapists are an integral component in mental health and addictions care and treatment programs.

TRO supports the objectives of standardizing the quality and delivery of mental health and addictions treatment programs and improving access so that no matter where a person lives in Ontario, they will have better and more consistent patient services and support. We also support the introduction and implementation of a made-in-Ontario mental health and addictions strategy knowing that a co-ordinated approach and timely access to services are necessary.

About Therapeutic Recreation:

Therapeutic Recreation is a collaborative and purposeful process facilitated by trained professionals offering recreation and leisure assessment, planning, intervention and evaluation to achieve individual goals. The profession uses meaningful recreation and leisure education, counselling and experiences to promote, restore, rehabilitate, and/or maintain quality of life and well-being. Therapeutic Recreation supports the development of strengths while addressing social, emotional, physical, spiritual and cognitive needs.

A cost-effective health care profession, Therapeutic Recreation is practiced across diverse health care and social service settings including hospitals, long-term care and retirement homes, mental health and addiction programs, rehabilitation centres, and disability programs.

TR and Mental Health and Addictions:

Therapeutic Recreation is practiced across in-patient, out-patient and community-based programs. As shown in evidence-based research, there are many benefits to Therapeutic Recreation for mental health populations. For instance, recreation therapy has been shown to significantly improve depression in the elderly (Karbalaee, Shahbalahi, Fallahi, & Zade, 2015) and is associated with a decrease in the prevalence of smoking as well as symptoms in persons with schizophrenia (Pirbalouti, Shariat, Ghazanfari, Naghani, & Kamaliyeh, 2017) all of which increase a persons quality of life and therefore, their mental wellness. Moreover, healthcare professionals, including Recreation Therapists, have been identified as key practitioners in the prevention

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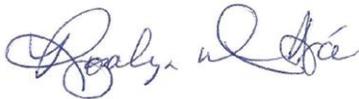
of violence within mental health settings. A 2008 inquest into the death of mental health patient Jeffery James recommends “Every effort should be made to ensure that inpatients have access to meaningful day time activities and therapeutic programming from the time of admission” (Lauwers, 2008, p.4). The clinical and therapeutic benefits of meaningful activities for mental health clients, is seen as an important component in reducing the use of restraint and seclusion (Bettridge, Mohri, & Voore, 2008).

Enclosed is an infographic with highlights on the benefits of TR in mental health and evidence-based research references.

If you have any questions or wish to discuss Therapeutic Recreation, please feel free to contact me at 289-626-8761, ext. 1 or by email at ed@trontario.org.

TRO would welcome the opportunity to contribute to the development of the Mental Health and Addictions Centre of Excellence to support the Ministry of Health in achieving its goals

Sincerely,



Rozalyn Werner-Arcé, CAE
Executive Director

cc: Sue Verrilli, R/TRO, President
France Gélinas, MPP, NDP Health Critic
John Fraser, MPP, PC Health Critic
Mike Schreiner, MPP, Green Party of Ontario

About TRO:

Established in 1999, Therapeutic Recreation Ontario (TRO) is the only professional association that represents Therapeutic Recreation practitioners in the province. Our membership of more than 1,800 includes practitioners, educators and students. Our mission is to lead the TR profession through growth, advocacy and innovation. We do this by offering quality membership services including professional development, information, networking, advocacy, and evidence-based research and best practices. We set the standard for excellence in the profession through our registration designations (R/TRO and R/TRO DIP).

Karbalae, Z., Shahbalahi, F. M., Fallahi, M., & Zade, S. H. (2015). The effect of recreation therapy on depression symptoms in older adults referred to a daycare center in tehran. *Sālmānd*, 10(2), 130-137. Pirbalouti, M. G., Shariat, A., Ghazanfari, A., Naghani, Y. S., & Kamaliyeh, N. G. (2017). The effects of recreation therapy on the habit of smoking and Positive–Negative symptoms among patients with chronic schizophrenia. *Acta Medica Bulgarica*, 44(2), 31-35. doi:10.1515/amb-2017-0016

