

**Remarks to The Honourable Peter Bethlenfalvy
Minister of Finance and President of the Treasury Board
Ministry of Finance 2021 Pre-Budget Consultations
February 5, 2021
Time Limit: 3 minutes, Via Zoom**

- Good afternoon. My name is Rozalyn Werner-Arcé, Executive Director of Therapeutic Recreation Ontario. On behalf of our 1800 members, I thank you for the opportunity to participate in these pre-budget consultations.
- Therapeutic Recreation professionals treat and help maintain the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of their clients by seeking to reduce depression, stress, and anxiety; recover basic motor functioning and reasoning abilities; build confidence; and socialize effectively.
- They support the development of strengths while addressing social, emotional, physical, spiritual and cognitive needs.
- Although my comments will focus primarily on long-term care, I would like to emphasize that in any healthcare setting, such as Grandview Children's Centre and Ontario Shores, Therapeutic Recreation has a profound effect on people's lives at an affordable cost.
- In long-term care, we all agree that nursing and PSW support is vitally important, but once a resident is up, dressed and had breakfast by 9am then what do they do with the rest of their day? It makes for a very long 12 hours if residents are left to languish with little or nothing meaningful to engage them.

- As one resident said: “For many of us, we withdraw because we are not provided with meaningful opportunities that allow us to continue to experience joy, purpose, and engagement in life.”
- Using therapeutic interventions, Recreation Therapists support quality of life outcomes based on assessments and treatments through group programs such as gardening , adaptive sports, laughter yoga, pet therapy, and more.
- Or by providing individualized care. In one care home, a gentleman who had dementia became quite agitated every afternoon. It was the Recreation Therapist who uncovered the root cause of the agitation. It turned out he was missing his daily routine of going to Tim Horton’s with his wife. The Recreation Therapist purchased Tim Horton coffee pods and cups and ensured that every afternoon someone sat with him to share in a cup of coffee. Rather than medicating him or ignoring him to the point the Behaviour Support team had to be called in, all it took was for a skilled Recreation Therapist to figure out the issue and create a personalized, cost-effective solution.
- Recreation Therapist’s end goal is to ensure that residents experience a life worth living until their very last breath. Therefore, our ask is:
 - To partner with the provincial government to effectively reform Long-Term Care to focus on ensuring the best quality of life for our seniors by improving the resident to staff ratio and strengthening staffing qualifications for recreation therapists.
 - And, for the government to recognize the essential value of therapeutic recreation for the overall well-being and quality of life of residents, staff, and family members. Thank you.