

February 13, 2017

Hon. Kathleen Wynne
Premier of Ontario
Legislative Building
Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A1

Dear Premier Wynne:

I am writing on behalf of Therapeutic Recreation Ontario (TRO) in support of the Action for Dementia campaign. TRO urges the Provincial Government to provide full funding in the 2017 spring budget for the Ontario Dementia Strategy.

According to the Alzheimer Society of Ontario (ASO), there are approximately 200,000 people in Ontario living with dementia today. As our population ages, the number of people with dementia is soaring and by 2038, it is expected that this number could double to 400,000.

As Therapeutic Recreation (TR) practitioners who support people with dementia in both long-term care and community settings, we know how dementia impacts not only the person who has dementia, but their family members too. The emotional, mental and physical stress of caring for someone who has dementia takes a tremendous toll on care partners.

There is an urgent need for more and improved community supports. With rising numbers and limited long-term care capacity, the system is over-stretched and relies too heavily on family care partners.

Therapeutic Recreation plays an integral role in dementia care in a range of settings, as it 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.

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TR is a cost-effective practice which aims to help people with dementia and their care providers to live well and improve quality of life through:

- Individualized programming that stimulates cognition through exercise, music, arts, intergenerational programming and so forth
- Social interaction and inclusion
- Carer self-care and respite

In addition to supporting a fully-funded Ontario Dementia Strategy, Therapeutic Recreation Ontario also recommends that funding be allocated directly to TR outside of the nursing budget. Therapeutic Recreation goes beyond the nursing mandate and yet is just as important as it enhances quality of life.

Therapeutic Recreation Ontario appreciates the opportunity to share how Therapeutic Recreation can be incorporated into a fully-funded Ontario Dementia Strategy and how Therapeutic Recreation practitioners play a significant role as part of a trained interprofessional dementia care workforce.

We welcome the opportunity to further discuss how TR offers cost-effective care and treatment options to ease an overburdened health care system and improve the quality of life of Ontario citizens.

Sincerely,



Leanne Hughes, R/TRO, CTRS
President-Elect

cc: Hon. Charles Sousa, Minister of Finance
Hon. Eric Hoskins, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care
France Gélinas, MPP, Health Critic
Jeff Yurek, MPP, Health Critic

About TRO:

Established in 1999, Therapeutic Recreation Ontario (TRO) is the professional association that represents 1600 Therapeutic Recreation (TR) practitioners, students and educators in the province. Our mission is to guide, support, educate and advocate to enable the Therapeutic Recreation practitioner to deliver quality professional services. TRO member services include professional development, networking, access to research and best practices, advocacy, and a Registration designation.