

The Honourable Dalton McGuinty
Premier of Ontario
Legislative Building
Queen's Park
Toronto ON

The Honourable Dwight Duncan
Minister of Finance and Chair of Management
Board of Cabinet
7 Queen's Park Crescent, 7th floor
Toronto, ON M7A 1Y7

The Honourable M. Aileen Carroll
Member of Provincial Parliament
Unit 1
20 Bell Farm Road
Barrie, ON L4M 6E4

Dear Mr Premier, Minister Duncan and Member of Provincial Parliament:

I am writing in support of the request from of the Ontario Massage Therapist Association (OMTA) for massage therapy to be exempt from the proposed new harmonized sales tax. The basis for this request is simply that the new harmonized tax as applied to massage therapy will cause significant harm to the public and to the profession of massage therapy. In Addition, assign an exemption will allow your government to show leadership on a national level.

Under the proposed harmonized sales tax, Ontarians will be forced to reduce the frequency with which they seek treatment; both for injuries and on-going preventative health care. This will happen because their health care benefits will be consumed to a greater degree by the proposed tax, or their out-of-pocket disposable income will be consumed by the proposed tax. Ontarians who will no longer be able to afford massage therapy services will see an impact on their health and, in the long term, this will effect Government spending in other areas of health care.

In addition to the negative impact on the health of Ontarians, the added 8% tax (massage therapy is already subject to the Goods and Services Tax) will also cause significant harm to the massage therapy profession in Ontario. The profession is already facing significant economic distress with many practitioners unable to earn sufficient income from their practise to be able to sustain themselves and their families.

As noted above, massage therapy, under Ontario's legislative framework, is a health care service; however, under the federal Excise Sales Tax it is not included within the definition of health care as it is not regulated in a sufficient number of provinces across Canada. As a result, massage therapist are already collecting and remitting the GST. By exempting massage therapy from the proposed 8% of the harmonized sales tax, Ontario can show leadership on the national level by ensuring that at least in this province, massage therapy remains a part of our definition of health care notwithstanding federal policies that exclude it.

Mr. Premier, Mr. Duncan and Member of Provincial Parliament, I understand that you are receiving many appeals from all sectors seeking an exemption. I believe that the impact on the health of Ontarians and the impact on the profession of massage therapy provide sufficient grounds to grant this request for an exemption.

Sincerely yours,

Name: _____

Address: _____
(house number / street name / city / postal code)