

Thursday, September 24, 2020

Hon. John Horgan,
Premier of British Columbia

Hon. Adrian Dix
Minister of Health

Dr. Bonnie Henry
Provincial Health Officer

Via email

RE: Ensure all physiotherapy services remain available and accessible to British Columbians during the pandemic.

Dear Premier Horgan, Minister Dix, and Dr. Henry;

In anticipation of the likelihood of the next wave of COVID-19 cases, the Physiotherapy Association of British Columbia (PABC) urges you to allow essential healthcare services to remain operable and available to those who rely on such services. This must encompass all services; in-person, virtual, and hybrid therapy provided by physiotherapists and physiotherapist assistants.

Physiotherapists work in many different healthcare sectors, including acute care, emergency rooms, intensive care units, rehabilitation centres, complex continuing care, long-term care homes and retirement centres, home care, primary health care, and private clinics in communities across British Columbia.

Following BC's Restart Plan, physiotherapists were able to resume practising under WorkSafeBC guidelines in Phase 2. Since then, our province's hardworking physiotherapists working in private clinics have demonstrated they can provide services safely in person as they prioritize infection prevention and control measures. Physiotherapy has not been a source of community spread.

Since the restrictions on physiotherapy first began, we have all learned a lot and continue to acquire knowledge and experiences. Unfortunately, we know that British Columbians have suffered without consistent access to physiotherapy services during the pandemic. Repeating the mistake of halting certain physiotherapy services in BC during the pandemic will leave many British Columbians without the care they need, at an increasingly vulnerable time.

We also know the variables of the pandemic have worsened BC's already devastating opioid crisis. A lack of access to physiotherapy and non-pharmaceutical pain management resources contributes to this crisis.

All physiotherapy services in BC must remain open and accessible. We recommend the following be prioritized to ensure physiotherapy care is available to British Columbians:

- Access to a full sequence of care required for conditions after hospitalization, both chronic and acute, including COVID-19 recovery.
- Treatment to manage debilitating pain and mobility issues. Without access to physiotherapy, these patients either seek help in emergency departments or face long-term limitations.
- Emergency in-person treatments for those who have suffered injuries due to motor vehicle accidents.
- Programs and treatments for WorkSafeBC worker claimants who require in-person services to fully return to their jobs.

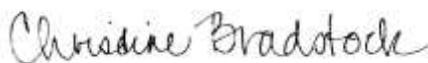
As a profession, we want to continue to safely provide physiotherapy services that are essential to British Columbians' health.

We are available to meet to discuss any questions you may have, and thank you for all you are doing during this pandemic.

Yours sincerely,



Alex Scott, PABC President



Christine Bradstock, PABC CEO