



Registered Massage Therapists'  
Association of Ontario

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April 24, 2025

Dr. Jane Philpott  
Chair, Primary Care Action Team  
Whitney Block, Suite 5630, 99 Wellesley St W  
Toronto, Ontario  
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Dear Dr. Philpott,

Congratulations on your appointment as Chair of the Primary Care Action Team. I extend my best wishes as you lead Ontario's ambitious efforts to connect every resident to comprehensive primary care by 2029.

I am writing on behalf of the Registered Massage Therapists' Association of Ontario (RMTAO) to advocate for the inclusion of Registered Massage Therapists (RMTs) as integral members of Ontario's expanding interprofessional primary care teams. This request is especially timely in light of the Ontario government's recent announcement of a \$213 million investment to create and expand up to 80 new primary care teams this year, connecting 300,000 more people to primary care and advancing the province's goal of universal access by 2029.

#### **Evidence from the WTCHS/CommunitiCare Health Pilot Project**

In 2023, the RMTAO partnered with West Toronto Community Health Services (now CommunitiCare Health) to pilot the integration of RMTs into a primary care team. The project aimed to evaluate both the health and cost benefits of embedding massage therapy within a publicly funded, interprofessional primary care setting.

Key findings from the pilot include:

- **High Patient Satisfaction:** 100% of surveyed clients would recommend the service to others, and 95% reported increased satisfaction with their overall care after the introduction of massage therapy.
- **Improved Health Outcomes:** Clients reported less pain, improved ability to manage their conditions, and enhanced quality of life. Notably, 61% reported reduced use of pain medication, and two-thirds indicated they required fewer visits to their doctor or nurse for their condition.
- **Faster Goal Achievement:** Access to massage therapy alongside other rehabilitation treatments enabled clients to reach their health goals more quickly.
- **Provider and System Benefits:** The integration of RMTs helped alleviate pressure on other providers, contributing to more efficient team-based care.

These results are particularly relevant as Ontario seeks innovative strategies to address healthcare human resource shortages, reduce wait times, and improve patient outcomes in a cost-effective manner. The pilot demonstrated that RMTs can play a meaningful role in managing musculoskeletal pain, stress-related conditions, and chronic health issues—areas that commonly burden primary care and drive up system costs.

### **Alignment with Ontario's Primary Care Expansion Strategy**

The government's new call for proposals emphasizes the importance of interdisciplinary, team-based care, with a focus on serving communities with the highest rates of unattached patients. RMTs are regulated health professionals, well-positioned to contribute to these teams alongside physicians, nurse practitioners, social workers, dietitians, and others. Their integration aligns with the province's priorities of:

- Expanding access to comprehensive, convenient, and connected care
- Supporting workforce recruitment and retention
- Delivering culturally responsive and equitable services
- Reducing reliance on medications and unnecessary physician visits

### **Request for Engagement**

Given the strong evidence and alignment with Ontario's strategic goals, the RMTAO respectfully requests an opportunity to meet with you and the Primary Care Action Team to present the full findings of the pilot project and discuss how RMTs can be further integrated into primary care teams across the province.

We are confident that expanding the role of RMTs within primary care will contribute to better health outcomes, greater patient satisfaction, and a more sustainable health system for all Ontarians. In that regard, we have attached a note outlining the benefits of integrating RMTs into primary health teams.

Please let us know your availability for a meeting at your earliest convenience. We look forward to collaborating with you to advance this important initiative.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Michael Feraday  
Executive Director and CEO  
Registered Massage Therapists' Association of Ontario