

From: mhayles@cocoo.on.ca
Subject: Important Message Regarding Revised List of Essential Services and Regulated Health Professionals
Date: April 4, 2020 at 4:30 PM



College of Chiropodists of Ontario

Dear Member,

Please find information below which deals with Premier Ford's announcement yesterday about an amended list of businesses classified as essential and regulated health care workers

1. **The list of essential business was updated to be effective 11:59 pm Saturday April 4, 2020. It now refers to all Regulated Health Professionals and allows those professional's business to be open for "urgent care only"**. Following the advice of the Chief Medical Officer of Health, the Ontario government has reduced the list of businesses classified as essential and ordered more workplaces to close. This measure is necessary to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and protect the health of the people of Ontario, while ensuring that necessary goods and services remain available. Regrettably, the revised list specifically makes reference to podiatrists and not chiropodists but is equally applicable to all of our members. This oversight has been brought to the attention of the Government.
2. The prior essential business list restricted health care providers to "emergency care". **The College interprets the term "urgent care" to be more expansive than "emergency care". The decision on whether the care is urgent is still one which needs to be made by the clinician and the change in the term is not an excuse to open your offices for all patient care.** The Government of Ontario has released modelling and projection data used to inform the Government on its response to COVID-19 <https://files.ontario.ca/po-covid-19-technical-briefing-en-2020-04-03.pdf>.

Based on this Premier Ford noted *"We are facing a critical moment in the fight against COVID-19 as we must do everything in our power to keep everyone safe and healthy and prevent our health care system from being overwhelmed"*. *"We have now reached a critical time in our fight against COVID-19"* said Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health *"Every step taken by the province and every effort made by each of us to avoid close contact with others are the key to our success as a province to stop the spread of this virus."* When making the decision on urgent care members must consider that the Chief Medical Officer of Health of ONTARIO strongly recommends that individuals over 70 years of age, individuals who have compromised immune systems and/or underlying medical conditions self-isolate. This means only leaving home or seeing other people for essential reasons and where possible, seeking services over the phone or internet. The College is seeking guidance from the Government and consulting with other RHPA Colleges to obtain information from them and will continue to provide further advice as this information becomes available.

If you are providing urgent care to patients, you are required to maintain appropriate IPAC standards:<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/updated-ipac-measures-covid-19.pdf>

If you do not have the necessary products to maintain the standards of infection prevention and control protocols including PPE, your office should remain closed and you cannot provide urgent care to patients. In that case you should be referring patients to members who are able to provide urgent care or the patient's family physician.

3. **The College understands that PPE and infection control products are in short supply but at this time it strongly recommends that you treat every patient as one which has potentially been exposed to the COVID-19 virus** (*Droplet and Contact precautions, including: Surgical/procedure mask Isolation gown Gloves Eye protection (goggles or face shield)*). There would appear to be some debate on whether members who having pre-screened a patient need to provide the same standard of infection prevention and control if passive and active screening results (not

verified by lab test) are negative for COVID-19. The fact that public hospitals may be having to adapt and make do with altered standards does not justify our members doing so. In taking this position the College is acutely aware of the shortage of equipment and supplies. It is for that very reason that members should only be treating patients in need of urgent care, however at this time, members are responsible to ensure, to the extent possible, that there is no transmission of the virus from their offices. The position of the College is a carefully considered one, having regard for the protection of the public, your patients, your staff and you.

If members have any questions about this they should contact the College.

Thank you,

Martin



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