



April 2, 2020

Hon. Christine Elliott, MPP  
Deputy Premier and Minister of Health  
5th Floor - 777 Bay Street  
Toronto, Ontario  
M7A 2J3

Dear Minister Elliott:

On behalf of the Ontario Association of Specialists and our more than 3,000 members across Ontario, I would like to thank you for your unwavering leadership as you deal with the unthinkable pressure facing decision makers like yourself.

I am writing to you today about the unforeseen consequences COVID-19 is having on our operations and future ability to serve patients in Ontario. Our members work across our health care system - many have experienced a reduction in referrals and as such a reduction in the funds required to keep their practices operational.

We would like to work with Ministry officials to ensure that Ontario's patients who rely or will soon need the services of a specialist practice are not left without needed care. As such, we are requesting interim funding to ensure that while regular funding is diminished, operational funding is sustained. This will ensure continued operations, wages, rent, and cost equipment are able to be retained. The reduction in service volumes due to COVID-19, if not addressed, will aggravate wait times and be a contributing factor to hallway healthcare in Ontario.

Although we are keenly aware of the mass pressures facing Ontario Health, we are hopeful of working with the Ministry to ensure that a future problem is avoided. Although it is easy to forget, many of Ontario's medical specialists are also small business operators, and without revenue they will be unable to continue operating in a critical field. Specialists remain on the front lines every day as we battle this pandemic, while our scopes and practices have changed, our dedication to Ontario's patients will never waver.

We understand the circumstances we are facing as a province and as a nation are unprecedented. We're not asking for a concrete solution at this time, just a public commitment from the government that this issue will be dealt with in due time so that we can relieve the anxiety and pressure this places on specialists under already trying circumstances. This will avoid layoffs, closed practices, and patients without needed care, perhaps the province could explore a solution similar to the one brought forward in Quebec, or what the Ontario government did in 2003 in response to the SARS outbreak.

We look forward to working with you to ensure that we can operate the best patient care possible in Ontario.

Sincerely,



David Jacobs, MD, FRCPC  
Chair

cc. OSA Board of Directors