



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Ontario Psychological Association Partners with the Ontario College of Family Physicians, Nurse Practitioners' Association of Ontario and the Association of Family Health Teams of Ontario to improve access to psychological services for front lines during COVID-19

(Toronto, ON) May 12th, 2020 – In response to Ontario's growing mental health crisis, hundreds of licensed psychologists have been mobilized **to assist our province's front-line workers in any industry** as they battle the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Ontario Psychological Association continues to monitor the mental health needs emerging in Ontario with regards to COVID-19. Our partnership with leading digital health companies including Strata Health and Think Research will enable us to improve navigation, resource matching, and access to virtual care. We are hopeful that with future investments, we will be able to scale up supports to vulnerable populations such as those experiencing homelessness and seniors who have been forced to isolate.

"This has been a trying time for everyone, especially our front-line workers. We are in this together and stand united with those who are under immense stress and pressure. As psychologists, we understand the biological, cognitive, emotional, and social impacts that this global crisis has caused. We are working with our partners to provide assistance to our communities,"

Dr. Diana Velikonja, President of the Ontario Psychological Association.

"We are so pleased to be part of such a great initiative. The Disaster Response Network ensures accessibility of essential mental health services for our frontline workers, vulnerable populations, and provides assistance in communities during this pandemic'.

Dawn Tymianski, CEO, Nurse Practitioners' Association of Ontario

"COVID-19 has created a lot of anxiety and stress for everyone and our teams are seeing an increased need for mental health support for not only their patients but for themselves as well. The support being provided by the OPA is critical and the importance of having this support, especially for those who are vulnerable and at risk, is essential in ensuring we have a healthy and resilient population who feel connected and supported during the pandemic. We thank the OPA for this very important initiative and are appreciative of our partnership."

Kavita Mehta, CEO, Association of Family Health Teams of Ontario

"The OCFP welcomes this collaboration with OPA, AFHTO and NPAO to provide needed mental health support for frontline workers. We know that the health impact of COVID-19 goes beyond the virus itself. It has meant interruptions in care for other chronic conditions and increased mental health struggles -- especially among those working on the frontlines of this pandemic. The OPA's program is meeting an important need for those who are providing care and we are proud to help support them through this program".

Leanne Clarke, CEO, Ontario College of Family Physicians

To learn more, contact Mr. Richard Morrison, CEO of OPA at Richard@psych.on.ca.

About Ontario Psychological Association

The Ontario Psychological Association (OPA) is a professional organization representing psychology in Ontario. The OPA provides leadership to promote the mental health and wellbeing of Ontarians, and to inspire excellence in the profession of psychology through research, education, clinical excellence and advocacy. The OPA strives for a healthcare system in which psychological services are accessible to all Ontarians, where psychologists can practice to their full potential, and the value of the professional healthcare services psychologists provide is widely and properly recognized. www.psych.on.ca.

About the Ontario College of Family Physicians

The Ontario College of Family Physicians (OCFP) represents more than 13,500 family physicians across the province. We support our members by providing evidence-based education and professional development, promoting and recognizing leadership excellence in family medicine, and advocating for the vital role family physicians play in delivering the highest quality care to patients and families across Ontario. A not-for-profit and voluntary organization, the Ontario College of Family Physicians was established in 1954 and is the provincial chapter of the College of Family Physicians of Canada. www.ontariofamilyphysicians.ca

About the Nurse Practitioners' Association of Ontario

The Nurse Practitioners' Association of Ontario (NPAO) is widely respected and recognized as the professional voice of Ontario NPs and is the largest NP-led organization in the country. NPAO is a not-for-profit association founded 1973 and works with government other healthcare stakeholders to achieve full integration of NPs across all sectors of the healthcare system. Full integration of NPs improves patient outcomes and has a positive impact on interprofessional collaboration. npao.org

About the Association of Family Health Teams of Ontario

The Association of Family Health Teams of Ontario (AFHTO) is the not-for profit association representing team-based primary care. We provide leadership to promote high-quality, comprehensive, well-integrated interprofessional primary care for the benefit of Ontarians. We are the advocate and resource to support the spread of knowledge and best practice among 191 interprofessional primary care teams, including family health teams (FHTs), nurse practitioner-led clinics (NPLCs) and others who provide comprehensive team-based care. www.afhto.ca

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