

July 6, 2020

**Dr. David Williams**

Chief Medical Officer of Health  
21st Flr, 393 University Ave  
Toronto, ON M5G 2M2

**RE: Encouraging municipal collaboration on health and safety guidelines during COVID-19**

Dear Dr. David Williams:

Thank you for your continued leadership to support the health and safety of Ontarians during the COVID-19 pandemic. As the situation continues to evolve, the Ontario Chamber of Commerce (OCC) is taking concerns from the business community and communicating them to all levels of government.

The OCC supports the Government of Ontario's decision to take a regional approach to reopen the province and we respect that each municipality and Public Health Unit has jurisdiction to add additional guidelines they deem necessary. However, businesses are experiencing unintended consequences related to the additional pandemic safety guidelines and enforcement measures implemented by individual Public Health Units.

In an effort to encourage municipal collaboration, I am inviting you or an alternative representative to a meeting along with other public health units on Wednesday, July 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020 from 12pm-1pm to hear some of the concerns from Ontario's business community and to facilitate a conversation about further collaboration.

Some of the examples of how this has impacted businesses are below:

- While provincial/federal officials have deemed face coverings to be necessary only if physical distancing cannot be maintained, Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health issued a class order calling on all residents to wear a face covering in commercial establishments. Patrons are not allowed inside establishments without a covering, and it is the owner's responsibility to enforce these regional rules.
- Earlier this spring, the Eastern Ontario Health Unit issued a public health order attempting to eliminate commercial establishments accepting cash as a payment in addition to mandating employees to maintain a 2-meter distance in drive-thru areas. This order was issued without notice and was accompanied with a fine. Due to the confusing implementation where only certain establishments were asked to comply and the inability for these rules to be sustainable, the order was redacted after one day.
- At least 12 Public Health Units have issued language surrounding the collection of guest data entering a premise and the language surrounding these guidelines varies by region from "must collect" to "consider collecting". In addition to guests expressing privacy concerns with employees,

the collection of personal data is challenging for certain restaurant models, such as Quick Service Restaurants as interactions with customers are quite limited.

Clear and consistent information is important for businesses owners and consumers to develop trust and to stay safe. We are concerned that these differing rules could cause confusion and frustration for all parties. This issue is particularly pertinent for business owners who operate in multiple jurisdictions, such as Quick Service Restaurants, and consumers who shop throughout the province as it begins to open.

Collaboration has been key with all levels of government, stakeholders and Ontarians. We believe additional collaboration between the Public Health Units would be a welcomed development. The recent announcement from all 34 medical officers of health regarding specific data-based thresholds illustrates the ability and importance of collaboration across these bodies.

After discussing with fellow concerned stakeholders, we feel an opportunity to openly discuss recommendations between the business and public health communities could be beneficial for both parties. Exchanging ideas and input may be able to help provide different perspectives to better inform rules and information going forward. Business owners and consumers adhering to clear and consistent health and safety rules is essential if our province is to beat COVID-19. We would appreciate your participation in a call to collaborate better on this timely issue.

Public health and safety are priorities for all Ontario businesses. We will continue to monitor and assess new developments pertaining to COVID-19 closely and work with our members, partners, and all levels of government to provide support to Ontario business.

Sincerely,



Rocco Rossi  
*President and CEO*  
*Ontario Chamber of Commerce*