Dear Minister Freeland,

First of all, we would like to welcome you to your new role as Finance Minister!

Second, we want to introduce ourselves. We are concerned Registered Psychotherapists and members of the task force called **#Stop Taxing My Therapy**, affiliated with the Ontario Society of Registered Psychotherapists.

We are writing to ask you to please review and reconsider the surprising decision Minister Morneau made in 2019 regarding the HST exemption for psychotherapists. After five provinces met the requirements to qualify for HST exemption for psychotherapy, former Finance Minister, Morneau, still chose to exclude Registered Psychotherapy (and registered mental health therapists in other provinces) from the HST exemption, an exemption granted to most health and mental health services.

We are asking for your help and advocacy to remove a tax which makes this essential service inaccessible to many Canadians when they need it most.

Currently, the only professionals providing psychotherapy who must charge HST are psychotherapists.

Nurses, social workers, psychologists, doctors and occupational therapists are exempt when providing *the same service* – psychotherapy.

RPs are professionals specifically trained to deliver psychotherapy, yet we are the only ones required to charge HST.

This discrepancy is unfair to both clients and psychotherapists.

Given there are over 7,000 RPs in Ontario alone, this situation affects many, especially since the pandemic when 1 in 4 Canadians are impacted by mental health/addiction. Removing this financial barrier is needed now more than ever.

Organizations such as the Ontario Society of Registered Psychotherapists (OSRP), the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association and the Partnership of Registered Psychotherapy Associations have spent 15 years advocating for HST exemption. For the HST to be removed, the Ministry of Finance required that the profession be regulated in five provinces. After the fifth province regulated the profession in 2019, former Finance Minister, Morneau, rejected the request for exemption, citing differences in regulated titles among the provinces: e.g. “Registered Psychotherapist” in Ontario and “Registered Counselling Therapist” in Nova Scotia, two titles that are often used synonymously. Further, a streamlining of titles was never established as a requirement for removing the HST. The goalposts keep moving.

We believe that charging HST also contradicts the government’s explicit stance on making mental health care accessible to Canadians. As our new Finance Minister, we are asking that you reconsider the decision not to exempt RPs from charging HST. We hope you will instead include our services in the list of professions who are exempt from charging HST.

We are much obliged for your time and consideration and look forward to speaking with you further.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

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