



Canadian
Physiotherapy
Association

Association
canadienne de
physiothérapie

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October 28, 2020

The Honourable Carla Qualtrough, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Dear Minister,

On behalf of the Canadian Physiotherapy Association (CPA), which represents 15,000 physiotherapists, physiotherapist assistants, physiotherapy technicians and students, I would like to thank the Government of Canada for its rapid response to Canadians experiencing financial hardship due to the COVID-19 outbreak. The support provided to individuals and businesses through Canada's COVID-19 Economic Response Plan has helped millions of Canadians through this difficult time.

I'm writing today to request that you extend a measure that would provide additional support for recent graduates who continue to face economic hardship: the suspension on Canada Student Loan Program (CSLP) repayments and interest accrual. Recognizing that your government has provided significant additional support to current post-secondary students by increasing grants and the maximum weekly amounts, measures to support recent graduates who face barriers to entering the workforce due to the pandemic are still needed.

Recent physiotherapy graduates have had clinical placement and ongoing employment opportunities disrupted due to public health closures, reduced capacity of clinics and delays of surgeries and treatment. The pandemic has also caused the administration of the clinical component of the national physiotherapy entry to practice exam to be delayed. The delay of this clinical exam has resulted in the delay of full licensure for the 2019 and 2020 cohorts of physiotherapy graduates and residents. While in many cases these recent graduates have been able to obtain temporary provisional licenses allowing them to practice to a limited degree, they are not eligible for full salary and are required to work under supervision. Further, there is a cohort of physiotherapy residents who are waiting to challenge the clinical exam a second time in British Columbia and Ontario who are not eligible for provisional licenses. These individuals all face continued financial hardships associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, and would benefit from some relief by having Canada Student Loan Program repayments and interest accrual extended throughout the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic.



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Physiotherapists are an integral part of the health care system and they play a key role in protecting, maintaining and improving the health and wellbeing of patients. Recent physiotherapy graduates and residents need additional support throughout the uncertainties of the pandemic as they work to transition to full practice and join their profession in serving the health care needs of Canadians. I encourage you to recognize the critical role of physiotherapy during these difficult times by extending the suspension of Canada Student Loan Program repayment and interest accrual during this time.

I look forward to continuing to support the government in its efforts to deal with COVID-19 pandemic and welcome any opportunities to contribute to its decisions and actions. Please contact me with any questions or if I can provide any further information.

Sincerely,

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