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Alex Kidd, Secretary [secretary@rmtao.com](mailto:secretary@rmtao.com)

Dear Ian, Susan and Alex.

I'm writing with concerns in regard to the Global News interview with Michael Feraday March 16<sup>th</sup>.

I think Michael Feraday missed an excellent opportunity to cast massage therapists in a positive light during the interview.

When I received some training in public and media relations during my tenure on the Board in the mid-90's, I learned to first answer the question directly, then use the opportunity to deliver cogent points supportive to my strategic relations plan. Every moment counts as media is reduced to a few sound bites.

For example, Mr. Feraday could have said "Massage Therapists treat, on a daily basis, acute and chronic injuries to the muscles and joints of the body. Massage Therapists are necessarily in close proximity to patients when applying treatment. We are pleased massage therapists have been prioritized for inoculation against the COVID virus to further reduce the risk of infection in health care settings."

Or, "Massage therapists are on the front lines of treating chronic pain, and there's good evidence of the positive effects their administrations have on mood and physical symptoms in cases of anxiety and depression. Inoculation priority along with other health care workers will reduce the risk of infection in health care settings across the province."

Notice the key words used, and compare this to what Michael Feraday said in the precious 20 seconds he had. "This is not the time to make a...you know...a decision of the moment. I think it's important to adhere to the plan.... We're not just, ah, about rehab, we provide a lot of relief to stressed-up things like depression stress, anxiety...these are huge issues right now with COVID."

[https://globalnews.ca/news/7700003/coronavirus-ontario-vaccine-priority-regulated-health-professionals/?fbclid=IwAR3PhDgfQjCHTT0UqGn0cZJy0zBLf\\_jTF3VOJqQVa-hf6Zb05516xubCpsA](https://globalnews.ca/news/7700003/coronavirus-ontario-vaccine-priority-regulated-health-professionals/?fbclid=IwAR3PhDgfQjCHTT0UqGn0cZJy0zBLf_jTF3VOJqQVa-hf6Zb05516xubCpsA)

Doug Ford did it right. He was baited by the media when they prodded why massage therapists are prioritized at this time (feeding into the media's assertion MT does not produce positive and important health outcomes) over the elderly. Ford ignored the bait, praised massage therapists (preserving their confidence and votes), then returned to his message. "God bless the massage therapists, we need them and they're great folks, but prioritize 80-plus. Let's make sure we take care of them (the elderly), they're the most vulnerable. Seventy is the most vulnerable, so on and so forth."

Ford has public and media relations training. It was not apparent Mr. Feraday was prepared for the interview. May I say too a shave and a haircut would have helped the sincerity of Mr. Feraday's message.

I am concerned about other ways Mr. Feraday has represented himself. During the RMTAO AGM he referred to an "insurer focus group". Those that attended the meeting with SunLife would share Mr.

Feraday offered no preparation to the committee ahead of time, and in fact downplayed the significance of preparation. Ultimately the “focus group” morphed into a SunLife sales pitch for Lumino, Sunlife's provider paid advertising service. There was nothing about the meeting that advanced relations between insurers and massage therapists.

Also, during the RMTAO AGM, Feraday reported meeting weekly with a government-facilitated group, including Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health, Dr. David Williams. Yet the close working relationship Mr. Feraday alluded to was absent when Dr. Williams announced on CBC November 23rd, 2020, massage therapists would not be permitted to operate (see 3:53 into the interview).

I can also assert that Mr. Feraday, accepting the invitation to meet virtually with our Niagara CBN twice in 2020, could have paid more attention to his appearance and presentation.

I suggest the RMTAO recruit and train representatives from each of the Community Based Networks (CBNs) in public and media relations training, to act in their community immediately when erroneous or misleading media appears. Further, the RMTAO may wish to call on Margaret Wallis-Duffy, an RMT with extensive public & media relations training, when the RMTAO receives a request for a media interview.

I understand the Executive Director's performance is reviewed by the Board five times/year. Please consider these points in your next evaluation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Don Dillon", with a horizontal line underneath.

Don Dillon, RMT