



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

Jenica Atwin

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
FREDERICTON

March 17, 2021

**The Honourable Chrystia Freeland
Minister of Finance**

**House of Commons Ottawa,
Ontario Canada
K1A 0A6**

Re: HST Exemptions for counselling and psychotherapy services

Dear Minister Freeland,

It is with great urgency that I'm writing to you today concerning the application of GST/HST on counselling and psychotherapy by the Canada Revenue Agency. It is my opinion that applying GST/HST to these services places too much strain on the hundreds of thousands of Canadians who require mental health services. There is also an impact on critical service providers whose costs reflect the taxes they are required to collect from clients in need.

The pandemic has significantly increased the numbers of Canadians seeking mental health support. As a member of the all-party Mental health caucus, I have witnessed the toll that the situation has taken on Canadians and the difficulties they faced trying to access these services. A number of organizations I have spoken to have noted a large spike in requests for their services since the beginning of the pandemic. Due to the high volume of demand, they sometimes are not able to provide the level of care needed with their limited resources.

Our mental health support systems are currently overwhelmed. Counselling is a service that many Canadians would greatly benefit from, but unaffordable prices prevent it from being an accessible option. We need to make every mental health service as affordable and accessible as possible in these turbulent times. Reducing the financial barriers associated with counselling is one of the most efficient ways to directly help Canadians. Just as psychologists and social workers are exempt from HST payment, I believe exempting counselors will allow them to lower their prices without having to absorb any additional

financial burden themselves. If the government were to take this measure, it would go a long way to support mental health workers, as well as the people they serve.

I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this further with you and I hope to see your government continue the leadership it has shown on other health files.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Atwin', written in a cursive style.

Jenica Atwin
Member of Parliament for Fredericton

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