



January 21, 2017

Dear MPP,

Re: Impact of the Psychotherapy Act on mental health services to young people

We would like to take this opportunity to express our grave concerns with regards to the impact of the *Psychotherapy Act* and the lack of action on regulating child and youth care practice in Ontario. As you know, Child and Youth Care Practitioners provide front line support to the most vulnerable children and youth, within children's mental health agencies, residential treatment facilities, hospitals, schools, and various community based social services. Child and Youth Care Practitioners offer support through relational, restorative, evidence based practices, life space intervention, social skill development and crisis management. Child and Youth Care Practitioners work in the spaces where children and youth and their families live their lives. We work to promote mental health and wellbeing through education and direct support in the moment, often in high risk situations. Our scope of practice is unique and our work includes psychotherapy technique, however many Child and Youth Care Practitioners do not qualify for the College of Registered Psychotherapists of Ontario (Please see attached Appendix for additional information).

This is now a serious situation for children's mental health and child and youth care practice. The OACYC has been requesting a college to ensure safety and best services to children and youth. The government has not responded to our requests. Please see our 2015 report "Safeguarding the Other 23 Hours: Legislation of Child and Youth Care Practice in Ontario".
<http://oacyc.org/legislation/the-proposal>

The combination of the psychotherapy act and having no professional college that legislates the work of Child and Youth Care Practitioners will result in a variety of issues. These could include the closing of programs, the termination of employment of some of our experienced, valued, and established staff, and an increase in wait times. Additionally, this will affect budgets due to the cost of hiring new differently trained staff members who will require additional professional development to ensure they can perform some of the work of the professional Child and Youth Care Practitioner.

The result is likely a serious disruption in service delivery as Child and Youth Care Practitioners are no longer able to do their jobs, the jobs they were trained to do at Ontario Colleges and Universities. As essential members of the multidisciplinary teams



across sectors, our work is valued and important to providing for the mental health needs of our young people.

At a time when we should be increasing services, this situation will in fact decrease available support to children who are already waiting far too long for urgent mental health services. This will impact service provision in hospital settings, schools, youth justice services, community service programs and residential care facilities which will likely then put additional pressure on the children's mental health services.

We ask at this time that members of the OACYC who have met our specific educational requirements, committed to our code of ethics for Child and Youth Care Practitioners, working within the scope of practice as outlined by the OACYC and the Canadian Council of Child and Youth Care Associations, be exempt from this act as we pursue our own college to legislate our work. Let's work together to ensure that all of those who have trained in Ontario to be valuable team members in the provision of mental health services to our young people can continue to provide these services in a timely and meaningful way.

We look forward to discussing these concerns with you at your earliest convenience.

Thank you,

Christine Gaitens

Christine Gaitens, CYW, B.A. CYC (Cert.) CYC-P
President of the Board
Ontario Association of Child & Youth Care