

Dear [insert MP name]:

It is a well-known fact that Canadians are facing a mental health crisis. While it has been gratifying to see some government funding and support for mental health, the lack of access to much needed services remains a pressing issue across the country.

Access is grounded in equity – no service or mental health professional should be beyond the reach of a person needing care simply due to finances. Even though equity is a central principle of our Medicare system, an inequality continues to exist.

Those who require access to psychotherapy often turn to the professionals specially trained to provide it – psychotherapists. There are tens of thousands of psychotherapists across Canada, helping people recover from addictions, cope with depression, address anxiety and live with the impact of trauma. Along with psychologists, psychiatrists and social workers, psychotherapists are an essential part of the mental health provider landscape.

Yet, despite performing an essential service in exactly the same manner as, for example, psychologists or social workers, psychotherapists are the only group of regulated mental health professionals subject to the Harmonized Sales Tax (HST). I am sure you will agree that demanding a client pay a 13 per cent surcharge for needed mental health care merely because of the type of professional administering the service is both unfair and unbalanced. It is poor public policy and it creates a significant barrier to access.

I know that you are committed to creating a fairer society and aiding the total health of all of its citizens by improving access to care. That is why I am encouraging you to make this injustice a priority throughout the upcoming election.

You have the power to support this arbitrary and inequitable tax treatment and help to make psychotherapy more widely available for those who need it. That is why I am encouraging you to make a commitment to correcting this injustice a priority.

Thank you for your support on this important matter and I would welcome the opportunity to speak with you further on this issue.

Yours truly,

{Your name}