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Open letter re: new restrictions to fitness facilities

To: Sylvia Jones and Nicola Mercer,

I am writing to you both with a number of concerns regarding both the Province's adoption of a vaccine passport Sept 22, 21 to access recreational facilities and WDGPHU's additional restrictions in this area.

As a registered Physiotherapist I prescribe general and specific exercise programs to a variety of populations; geriatrics, neurologically impaired, degenerative joint conditions, obese, auto-immune, just to name a few. I am concerned that some of my patients, and others in the same predicament, who have chosen to not get fully vaccinated for their own personal reasons and discussed with their family practitioners, will not be able to access these programs in the community now, especially with the coming of winter and thus a decreased ability to use the outdoors for their programs. These people, not being able to attend these vital programs ? aquafit, yoga, falls prevention classes, COPD and CVA classes, cardiac rehab etc ? will add strain to the health care system and suffer a decline in their overall health. They will have more falls and broken hips and end up in ER and surgery, have more pain and take more opioids, gain more weight and increase their COV and diabetes risks, spiral their COPD into a sharper descent and earlier death, lose ROM and function and require more homecare or LTC. These are just a few realistic scenarios that your policy will be creating.

I won't even go into the issue with barring children, teens, their parents and adult-learners from swimming lessons. An essential skill such as swimming and learning water safety to prevent drownings should not be restricted to just the vaccinated. That is unethical.

I ask you to reconsider this passport and Nicola, your additional further restrictive policy, as I feel you have not done an adequate costs/ benefits analysis on the harms your policy will be creating.

I have repeatedly requested from WDGPHU the studies/ evidence they have used to support the segregation of unvaccinated and vaccinated people. I have yet to receive any of this evidence which would support the exclusion of unvaccinated people from these settings in order to keep others from getting or passing on the virus. Thus, there is no medical reason to exclude this population from the essential ability to attend these important fitness classes or facilities to ensure good health and prevent disease.

Yours in health,

Peggy Bond, Reg. Physiotherapist

Orangeville, Ont.

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