

May 11, 2021

**VIA E-MAIL: [premier@ontario.ca](mailto:premier@ontario.ca)**

The Honourable Doug Ford, MPP  
Premier of Ontario  
Premier's Office  
Room 281, Legislative Building, Queen's Park  
Toronto, Ontario  
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Dear Premier Ford:

With your government now reviewing next steps for when the province's current Stay-at-Home order expires on May 19, Restaurants Canada is renewing our call for patios to reopen.

When provincial and municipal health officials encouraged restaurants to reopen for patio dining in Grey-Lockdown areas back in March, they did so in recognition of the lower risk of transmission in outdoor spaces and the need for options to support mental health and well-being. By turning around less than two weeks later to reverse this decision, your government needlessly undercut confidence in restaurant safety and deprived Ontarians of an important outlet for combating lockdown fatigue.

This was reinforced by remarks from infectious disease specialist, Dr. Abdu Sharkawy, who said at a press conference last month that "outdoor food, frankly, with the right monitoring, the right supervision of patios, and the right setup, should have never stopped."

Thank you for acting on our recommendation to ensure that restaurant workers are explicitly included in Group Two of the province's vaccination schedule. As more and more Ontarians receive vaccinations, it is important that we give them a glimpse of the light at the end of the tunnel. Many restaurants across the province have now been closed for 340 days. Reintroducing outdoor patio dining would provide a much needed boost to these hard-hit businesses, as well as the mental health and well-being of Ontarians.

We look forward to working with you and your government to help make this move as soon as possible.

Sincerely,



Todd Barclay  
President and CEO

c.c.: Members of Ontario Cabinet