

September 6th, 2019

Hon. Michael Tibollo
Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions
777 Bay St.
Toronto, ON
M7A 2J3

Dear Minister Tibollo,

Following up from our letter from July 8, 2019, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA) is requesting a meeting with you to discuss our shared goal of advancing better mental health for Ontario.

Ontario's agriculture sector is a major economic engine, providing jobs in both rural and urban communities. Our farms offer stability to rural communities and represent an integral part of our social fabric by providing a healthy, safe food supply. OFA is proud to have taken a leadership role on this issue, from engaging early on with researchers from the University of Guelph, to raising awareness among our commodity partners, to assisting in the launch of a county-level pilot project aimed at delivering the mental health services farmers need.

We would like to discuss how OFA and the Ontario Government can work together to expand our reach and meet the needs of our farmers and rural residents living with mental health challenges. With your help, we believe we have a tremendous opportunity to build a sustainable approach to research, evidence-based programming, and awareness training specific for farmer mental health.

OFA would be pleased to meet with you and your staff as soon as possible to further discuss the mental health and addictions issues our farmers and families are confronting. We know this is not an issue we can solve quickly, but with your support, we can begin addressing the needs of a historically under-represented group.

Sincerely,



Keith Currie
President
Ontario Federation of Agriculture