

ONTARIO CAMPS ASSOCIATION

Community. Leadership. Life.

October 29, 2020

Dr. David Williams,
Chief Medical Officer of Health
Ontario Ministry of Health

Re: 2021 Summer Camp Guideline Development

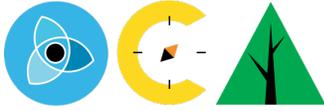
Dear Dr. Williams:

As the Chair of the COVID-19 Task Force of the Ontario Camps Association (OCA), I am writing to propose a reengagement of discussions related to the successful resumption of Day Camp operations and the opening of Overnight Summer Camps and Outdoor Education Centres in 2021. We appreciate that your immediate priority may be the flattening of the 2nd wave; however, we would greatly appreciate a resumption of preliminary discussions by late November.

The OCA and our Task Force are ideally positioned to play a collaborative role with you and your office in the development of *Guidelines for the Safe Operation of Summer Camps in 2021*. Our Task Force is currently in a *Research Phase*, collecting detailed feedback from all Overnight and Day Camps and Outdoor Centres, most of which *operated successfully* last summer, including many in Canada, the United States and across the globe. In addition, we are collecting scientific reports (including CDC), American Camps Association information and the testimony of camp directors. These will help enormously to inform the development of guidelines. We are also reaching out to medical experts at the Hospital for Sick Children for content expertise and guidance.

Ontario is a mecca for Summer Camps and is widely viewed as a world leader within the industry. Our association has over 450 Member camps, impacting more than 400,000 children—Our members hire over 35,000 skilled young adult leaders every year to lead camp programs and teach activities. Many camps have operated for over 50 years, some for more than 100 years. The histories and values promoted at camp have an enormous cultural importance to our province. Acting for the OCA, the Task Force will act strictly for OCA member camps. For more than 87 years the OCA has provided strong leadership and stewardship for its members by enforcing the highest possible operational standards.

70 Martin Ross Avenue, Toronto, ON M3J 2L4
416-485-0425 1-844-485-0425
ontariocamps.ca



ONTARIO CAMPS ASSOCIATION

Community. Leadership. Life.

Along with public health and other governmental bodies, the OCA Standards ensure safe and healthy camp operations. Thanks to our leadership, OCA camps enjoy a remarkable record of health and safety.

Consequently, we have the ability to contribute directly in the development of practical, reasonable and evidence-informed safety protocols to protect campers and staff at Day and Overnight Camps and Outdoor Education Centres in 2021.

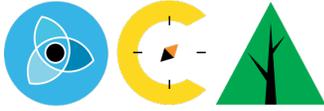
While there may appear to a great deal of time before next summer, Camps are already planning, hiring, registering campers and potentially adapting their camp operations *now*, and they are looking to us for direction, and in turn, the OCA is taking the initiative to develop guidelines for their safe opening and operations during the summer of 2021. More acutely, Outdoor Education Centres, some of which operate independently or are integral to Summer Camp operations, are facing particularly tight timelines; many of these operations begin their programs long before Summer Camps open. Therefore, it is essential that we leverage the time available and begin working with you and your team as soon as possible. Accordingly, we hope that you would please consider the following:

- Assign or confirm the who will work directly on the Summer Overnight Camp file as soon as possible;
- Allow a representative from the OCA to contribute to the ongoing revisions of the Day Camp Guidelines; Our Task Force has direct expertise to offer and extensive research has been completed, both of which will serve to further strengthen these efforts;
- Allow us to begin preliminary discussions with these key players as soon as possible, end of November at the latest, with an understanding that more intensive exchange will begin early in January 2021.

We are well-aware that all aspects of the COVID-19 landscape are changing rapidly. This has and will continue to be factored into our planning, particularly the guidelines themselves. Further development of POC rapid tests, availability of PPE and possibly, vaccines, will act directly to modify our plans as they are developed. The status of the border and international travel protocols will also have a significant impact on how camps will have to adjust their operations. Notwithstanding, an entire industry and just under a half million stakeholders, is counting on a timely resumption of discussions so that it can adapt, prepare and look forward to the re-emergence of all Camps and Outdoor Education Centres in 2021.

We continue to learn a great deal from the resumption of school and society's transition towards indoor settings. Summer Camps and Outdoor Education Centres will offer distinct advantages for children and youth, given that a great deal of time is comprised of *outdoor activity*, not to mention the profoundly

70 Martin Ross Avenue, Toronto, ON M3J 2L4
416-485-0425 1-844-485-0425
ontariocamps.ca



ONTARIO CAMPS ASSOCIATION

Community. Leadership. Life.

positive impact these programs have on physical and mental health. The need for these opportunities in 2021 cannot be understated!

Starting a dialogue in November will help our efforts, the entire Camp industry and of course, hundreds of thousand stakeholders that include children, youth and their families across Ontario.

On behalf of the OCA, I am grateful for the opportunity to communicate with you,

Sincerely,

Jack Goodman, PhD
Chair, OCA COVID-19 Task Force
Owner/Director, Camp New Moon

Professor, Faculty of Kinesiology and Physical Education,
University of Toronto,
Adjunct Scientist, UHN/Mt. Sinai Division of Cardiology

cc: Nina.Arron@ontario.ca
Daniel.Warshafsky@ontario.ca
christine.elliott@pc.ola.org
Charles.Gardner@smdhu.ca
jill.dunlop@pc.ola.org
todd.smithco@pc.ola.org
michael.tibolloCO@pc.ola.org
Lisa.macleodco@pc.ola.org
Joy@ontariocamps.ca
jeff@campwenonah.com