



**ATTORNEY GENERAL
MINISTER OF JUSTICE**

Room 104
Legislative Building
Winnipeg, Manitoba CANADA
R3C 0V8

MAY 15 2020

John Carpay, B.A., LL.B.
President
Justice Centre for Constitutional Freedoms
253 - 7620 Elbow Drive SW
Calgary AB T2V 1K2

Dear Mr. Carpay:

On behalf of Premier Pallister, thank you for your correspondence of April 14, 2020.

The arrival of COVID-19 in Canada and in our province has presented unprecedented challenges, and our government's highest priority is the health and safety of all Manitobans. To this end, the Manitoba Government has declared a state of emergency under *The Emergency Measures Act* and Manitoba's Chief Provincial Public Health Officer has issued public health emergency orders under *The Public Health Act*. Models have also been developed in Manitoba to inform the management plan for COVID-19. As new information is received, officials will continue to refine the projections, models and health advice for Manitobans.

To date, the data under the models indicate that Manitoba's public health measures have limited the spread of the virus and have kept the infection rate manageable. Manitoba will ease the public health measures and implement a phased approach to restore a variety of non-essential healthcare and retail businesses under strict guidelines. Some restrictions will remain, including public and private gatherings of no more than 10 people, and self-isolation for 14 days following travel.

In addition, the public health emergency orders that have been issued have included measures designed to mitigate their impact on the public. Some of these include:

- Hospitals and other medical facilities across the province have continued to be fully operational and schedule surgeries, tests, chemotherapy and other procedures in accordance with their own assessment of patient needs, patient and staff safety, and hospital capacity.

- Doctors have been permitted to operate their practices in accordance with their own assessment of need and safety. The province has also supplemented mental health services through a digital counselling program being operated by professional therapists.
- Public daycares remain open for the children of parents who are able to work in accordance with the public health order and home daycares of up to eight children continue to operate.
- Numerous critical businesses have been permitted to remain open.

The measures required to deal with the COVID-19 threat are continually re-evaluated and adjusted based on the status of the pandemic in Manitoba and the assessment of the health threat that it presents for Manitobans. Effective May 4, 2020, restrictions in a number of areas are to be relaxed. These are outlined in *Restoring Safe Services: Manitoba's Pandemic Economic Recovery Roadmap* at: <http://www.manitoba.ca/restoringsafeservices>.

As reflected in the Roadmap, new orders were issued by the Chief Provincial Public Health Officer on April 30, 2020 to take effect on May 4, which will:

- (i) *Remove the restrictions on the practice of regulated health professionals, including chiropractors, physiotherapists, dentists and podiatrist and enable massage therapy and acupuncture services to resume*
- (ii) *Enable non-essential retail businesses to reopen*
- (iii) *Enable a number of recreational facilities to reopen*

If you wish to review the public health orders, they can be accessed at: <https://www.gov.mb.ca/covid19/soe.html>.

The government is also acutely aware of the financial challenges arising because of the public health measures taken to address COVID-19. Some steps, such as deferring tax payments and postponing tenant eviction hearings, have already been announced. All of the provinces are working closely with the federal government to seek to address the national and local impacts on the economy from this pandemic. This ongoing process will likely last for several years.

The government is also in the process of developing studies to determine the impact of COVID-19 and the public health measures on a number of sectors. Currently, the issues being considered for study include:

- the impact on mental illnesses such as mood and anxiety disorders, schizophrenia and hospitalizations for suicide attempts;
- the impact on substance use disorders;
- the impact on domestic and family violence;
- the impact on CFS involvement;
- the impact on Justice involvement; and
- the impact on next grade readiness.

We are hopeful that valuable information will ultimately be available to provide insight into the impact of COVID-19 and the health orders on the public. As your letter recognizes, this type of

information is necessary to undertake a critical evaluation of the response to the current pandemic and to develop contingency plans if we are faced with a similar health threat in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cliff Cullen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Cliff Cullen
Minister of Justice
Attorney General

c The Honourable Brian Pallister, Premier