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Via email: [premier@ontario.ca](mailto:premier@ontario.ca)

Premier Ford:

We represent a coalition of sports and recreational organizations across Ontario. We understand the importance of reducing the strain on Ontario's health care capacity during the COVID-19 pandemic and appreciate the significant burden you face when making decisions. In fact, we believe it is critical that all Ontarians continue to take this virus in a very serious manner and adhere to protocols aimed at protecting public health. That too is our goal.

At the same time, we cannot overstate the mental health crisis facing our children and youth, and the alarming studies and reports emerging about the mental and physical well-being of adults. Much of this is due to despair, lack of physical activity, and the inability for individuals to participate in normal, everyday life activities, particularly in the outdoors.

One year into this pandemic, we understand more about the risks of COVID-19 than at any time before, including the fact that cases of outdoor transmission are rare. A recent report in the *New York Times* has gone so far to state that, "the share of transmission that has occurred outdoors seems to be below 1 percent and may be below 0.1 percent." There is also not a single documented COVID-19 infection anywhere in the world from casual outdoor interactions. Medical experts across Ontario, including the Ontario Medical Association, the Canadian Paediatric Society, and members of the government's own health advisory tables have called for outdoor recreation to be safely opened.

As such, we are urging your government to follow the advice of your own health experts, and immediately re-open outdoor activities such as tennis, golf, basketball, pickleball, volleyball, soccer and others, in order to provide a much-needed outlet for the residents of Ontario; people living in urban, suburban, and rural parts of the province who have spent most of the spring and winter confined to their homes.

Please consider the facts before you, and the health and well-being of all Ontarians as we work through this pandemic together.

Respectfully,

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**Athletics Ontario**

Peter Milovanovic  
President  
**Pickleball Ontario**

Jo-Anne Ljubicic  
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