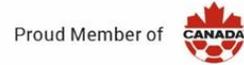




ONTARIO SOCCER
7601 Martin Grove Road, Vaughan ON L4L 9E4
905.264.9390 • ontariosoccer.net



Play.
Inspire.
Unite.

INFORMATION BULLETIN

Bulletin #: I2021-042
Date: May 5, 2021
To: Ontario Soccer; District Membership, ORA and Associate Members
CC: Ontario Soccer Board of Directors, Staff
From: Johnny Misley, Chief Executive Officer
Subject: Ontario Soccer calls on Premier Doug Ford to address the Hidden Pandemic impacting youth athletes across the province

During the Canadian Mental Health Association's (CMHA) 70th annual Mental Health Week, May 3-9, Ontario Soccer has urgently renewed its plea for the Government of Ontario to rescind their ban on organized outdoor sport and allow our membership to safely Return to Play at the earliest opportunity.

The following is an excerpt from today's letter to the Premier of Ontario;

The CMHA teaches us that regardless of whether we have a mental illness, our mental health is something we can protect and nurture. Organized and controlled outdoor activity is a key way to achieve this in a safe and affordable manner. Tragically, and for far too long, organized outdoor play has not been available as an accessible way for all Ontarians to take care of themselves, irrespective of their background, demographic, or socio-economic status.

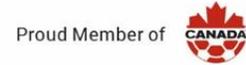
Our member organizations in every corner of the Province have patiently supported the current stay-at-home order, to play our part in overcoming this third wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, with every passing day that children are kept away from soccer pitches, baseball diamonds, basketball courts, and other outdoor playing fields and facilities, **a mental health crisis grows.**

It is time we take the mental health of three million children and youth seriously in Ontario. Indeed, continuing to dismiss their physical and mental well-being as a necessary trade-off for combating COVID-19 is no longer acceptable. On behalf of the 500,000 sidelined participants under our care, this social and physical neglect of our children and youth must stop.

"It is time to address the Hidden Pandemic that is plaguing our province's children and youth as this mental health crises continues to unfold," said Johnny Misley, Ontario Soccer Chief Executive Officer. "The Ontario Government's own Science Table has stated that the measures taken against organized, outdoor activities will not help in the fight against COVID-19 and disproportionately harm children in the process."



ONTARIO SOCCER
7601 Martin Grove Road, Vaughan ON L4L 9E4
905.264.9390 • ontariosoccer.net



Play.
Inspire.
Unite.

The Ontario Medical Association agreed with the statements put forward by the Ontario Government's Science Table and issued their [own supporting statement](#).

Medical Leaders agree that outdoor sports are a low-risk, high-benefit pursuit for children and youth to engage in to safely reclaim their health and well-being.

Just as importantly, there is an [overwhelming consensus](#) (84%) among Ontario's voting constituency, that sports have a positive impact on their child's mental health and/or stress levels.

"All things considered; it is imperative that participants **Return** to meaningful **Play** in the very near future," said Peter Augruso, President and Chair, Ontario Soccer Board of Directors. "When the latest Shutdown ends, we are requesting the Government of Ontario allow children, youth, and adults to engage in training and appropriate modified competition as outlined in our 77 page [Ontario Soccer Return to Play Guide and Safety Protocols](#) that is currently in use by our membership throughout Ontario."

To read the full letter from Ontario Soccer to Premier Doug Ford, please visit [OntarioSoccer.net](#).

How do I stay connected to Ontario Soccer?

For further information please refer to the latest bulletins on the [COVID-19 Updates](#) page, which has all the latest information from Ontario Soccer, as well as resources for your members. Please consider placing a dedicated link to the [COVID-19 Updates](#) on the homepage on your website.

If you have not subscribed to our weekly e-Newsletter, [Subscribe to INSIDE THE 18](#). Follow us on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [YouTube](#).