

November 14, 2022

Dear Mayor Eisenberger and Mayor-Elect Horwath,

I'm writing to you today on behalf of GoodLife Fitness and Fit4Less to share our joint concerns around the rising COVID-19 numbers amidst an already difficult time with flu season, respiratory issues with children, limited available medication, and the continuing strain on our healthcare system. We share your concern with these trends and believe the work you are doing is invaluable and representative of a genuine commitment to mitigate the risk to the people of Ontario.

It is no secret that the pandemic and its closures had a tremendous impact on the fitness industry and our organization. GoodLife and Fit4Less continue to balance the longstanding impact of the COVID-19 pandemic with the current challenging economic environment and our work towards our overall mission to give everyone in Canada the opportunity to live a fit and healthy good life.

It is our fundamental belief that the contributions of the fitness industry positively impact the overall healthcare system. There are studies including a recent [report](#) in the British Journal of Sports Medicine that indicate a strong association between regular physical activity and COVID vaccine effectiveness. Physical activity is one of the most important factors in one's health and ability to recover from illness; and the more physically active our population is, the less strain on our hospitals and healthcare system. In fact, a [study](#) conducted by the Fitness Industry Council of Canada and 4Global showed that physical activity generated \$23.4 billion in health savings in 2019 through preventing, managing and treating the mental and physical impacts of chronic conditions.

Beyond these benefits, regular physical activity has a positive impact on overall mental wellness. We believe that the opportunity we provide our members to become fitter and healthier truly represents a pillar of our healthcare system that is too often undervalued among decision makers.

That is why we have taken clear steps to create an environment where our members can be physically active in a safe and healthy environment. This includes four fundamental pillars that are part of [The GoodLife Standard](#): Health and Safety; Cleanliness; Service and Experience; and Respect, Caring and Belonging. These pillars have been developed with the support of leading physicians and experts and have been extremely well received by both our members and employees, and we are confident in their ongoing role in keeping our clubs safe.

As you contemplate the steps needed to withstand this challenging environment, we encourage you to consider the impact of our sector in your decision making, and the toll of COVID related mandates. We have made tremendous strides in creating safe and healthy environments for our members, and we have trust in our members to adhere to our protocols and make decisions that are aligned with their personal health priorities (i.e.,wearing a mask when they feel they need to). We are concerned that any mandated requirement will discourage gym use and lead to an additional strain on our sector, but more importantly the already challenged healthcare system.

Additionally, mandated requirements create an extremely challenging environment for our employees and their limited ability to enforce protocols. Through the various stages of the pandemic, our employees endured significant verbal and physical abuse when trying to enforce the requirements. While we believe it is important to offer a safe environment for our members, we are also mindful of our responsibility to provide a safe working environment for our employees. We believe this challenge would only be amplified as members have become accustomed to a “post-COVID” environment.

Our hope is that you will consider these factors in your decision-making process over the next few months. It is our strong recommendation that any steps towards mandating masks or social distancing are not widespread, rather highly targeted to the environments that need it most, like hospitals, schools and long-term care facilities.

As Canada’s largest fitness company, we are very committed to working with you and your public health unit and would be happy to discuss this further. The fitness sector has suffered enough over the last few years and we firmly believe that we can continue to operate safely and contribute to the healthcare system.

We would value the opportunity to have a call with you to discuss this further, and appreciate your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

**Jane Riddell**  
President  
GoodLife Fitness

**Tracy Matthews**  
Vice President, Experience & Safety  
GoodLife Fitness