

March 16, 2020

To Whom It May Concern:

The rapidly evolving coronavirus (COVID-19) situation is unsettling, changing daily life and the operations of many businesses, schools and workplaces. There is a great deal of uncertainty and we are all relying on new briefs, social media, health videos and information provided electronically to ensure we have received the most current health updates. This information is being updated on an hourly basis and it is important the content reaches all Canadians.

It is at this time we would like to remind all government agencies of the importance of providing **real-time captioning** and **sign language interpretation** for the millions of Canadian that rely on this form of communication accessibility to obtain lifesaving and critical information on the COVID-19 virus. Without providing this form of accessibility our members are being excluded from receiving the most up to date information they require to ensure their and their families safety.

All instructional videos, news releases and breaking news whether online or on live television or recorded should have captioning and sign language interpretation to ensure that information reaches our community to ensure they are provided with this vital life saving information.

The Canadian Hard of Hearing Association (CHHA) has a long history – dating back to the early 1980s - of serving the needs of Canadians living with hearing loss through advocacy, communications and public service. Our history is important. It reminds us of the determined and collective effort of our founding community needed to address the needs of Canadians living with hearing loss. Hearing loss is one of the most isolating disabilities. It frequently goes undetected and untreated in most adults. This leads to social isolation, depression and potential safety issues.

Thank you for your tireless efforts during these uncertain times in protecting Canadians, however, we ask that you remember the importance of reaching this population and ensure these 2 forms of accessibility are provided.

If you have any questions or require any assistance in providing this communication accessibility, please do not hesitate to reach out and let me know.

Regards,



Christopher T. Sutton
National Executive Director