



September 20, 2021

Dr. Joel Moody, Chief Prevention Officer/Assistant Deputy Minister
Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development
14th Flr, 400 University Ave
Toronto, ON M7A 1T7

Sent electronically.

RE: Congratulations on your appointment and introduction to RESCON

Dear Dr. Moody,

RESCON would like to offer our sincere congratulations on your appointment as Chief Prevention Officer and Assistant Deputy Minister to the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development.

The Residential Construction Council of Ontario (RESCON) represents over 200 residential builders of high, mid, and low-rise buildings in the province, with a focus on the GTA. Our members build Ontario's communities, homes, and future. We are committed to providing leadership and fostering innovation in the industry through the following six core focuses: Health and Safety; Training and Apprenticeship; Government Relations; Labour Relations; Building Science and Innovation; Regulatory Reform and Technical Standards.

In addition, RESCON is the permanent chair of the Ontario Residential Council of Construction Associations (ORCCA), an organization which brings together the overwhelming majority of the accredited employer bargaining associations (EBAs) in the residential sector and has representation on or works closely with the IHSA (through the regional, provincial, and CLRC committees), WSIB (CAC other industry consultation committees), and other safety committees throughout the province.

As representatives of constructors, owners, construction managers, and project managers we are deeply concerned and involved in the entire residential sector, not just issues that directly impact our members. As a result, we take a leadership role and would like to take the opportunity to acquaint you with three issues of importance to our members and the broader residential construction industry – COVID-19 mitigation in construction, mental health and addictions, and anti-racism and anti-discrimination in construction.

COVID-19 mitigation in construction

In March 2020 RESCON took a direct leadership role working with the CPO and coordinating a labour-management response to the crisis. We were able to play a direct role in the creation of the construction guidelines and have focused on providing leadership in this area ever since.

The guidelines and subsequent regulations, best practices, and employer/industry policies have been successful in mitigating the on-site spread of COVID-19. As a result, cases within the workforce remain low. Keys to this include industry, labour, IHSA and government collaboration and communication. Many of our members were early adopters of enhanced PPE (including masks), the Provincial Rapid Testing Program and this continues to significantly assist our tracking and tracing efforts. Rapid testing as an



enhanced screening tool proactively encourages greater compliance with site-specific guidance as it shows a strong commitment to safety from participating Employers and the province of Ontario.

Accelerated vaccination schedules and prioritization for essential industries allowed for construction workers to get their first and second doses faster which has also helped keep COVID-19 cases low. We continue to encourage construction workers to get vaccinated and ensure that public health and sector-specific best practices – mask wearing, physical distancing, hand hygiene and eye-protection – are maintained.

Through our six COVID-19 related webinars we have been able to unite the construction industry, effectively communicate safety enhances, amended requirements, and emerging best practices to ensure construction is responsive to COVID-19 as it evolves. For example, we were one of the first associations in construction to develop and release a vaccination policy template and are currently leading a coalition of 8 construction associations to gathering data on vaccination rates through a [survey](#). Just this past week, in partnership with Tridel, we hosted a GO-VAXX vaccination bus at a Tridel site and have secured similar partnerships between GO-VAXX (MOH) and other members.

We are all in with respect to COVID-19 and are eager to continue our partnership with your Ministry and the Chief Prevention Office including any vaccination clinics within the construction industry.

Finally, we are excited to welcome you to our sixth COVID-19 webinar (September 23, 1-3 pm) on Vaccine Policies and Promotion in the Workplace where we will introduce you to our members and the broader construction industry.

Anti-racism and anti-discrimination

Last year, RESCON formed the Anti-Racism Roundtable to address increases of racist and discriminatory incidences in construction. Since then, we have launched the Construction Against Racism Everywhere (CARE) campaign to foster allyship, ensured our members had an up-to-date anti-discrimination and anti-racism employer policies and held two webinars – [Addressing Racism in Construction](#) and [International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination](#). Our next webinar, [our Second Annual Addressing Racism in Construction](#) webinar is on September 28 from 1-3 pm. Our next goal is to highlight the diverse voices that make up our industry in the 'BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Colour) in Construction' awareness campaign. We hope this campaign shows to racialized and marginalized youth that the construction industry is welcoming to all, and that careers in construction are viable and well-paying.

We are taking best practices from health and safety and applying it to our efforts with DEI through advocating for anti-discrimination and anti-racism training to be incorporated into existing 4 Step and 5 Step training. This past Spring, we sent a letter to the CPO and Prevention Council highlighting the merits of this training and the impact it could have on new entrants to the workforce. We are hopeful that progress can be made on this ask under your leadership.

Mental health and addictions



COVID-19 has exacerbated the mental health and addictions challenges that Ontarians, including construction workers, face daily. As an association, RESCON has made addressing mental health and addictions a strategic priority.

This upcoming November, we will be hosting our third annual Addressing Mental Health in Construction. Our priorities going forward regard Mental Health First Aid Training for Health and Safety Managers and Site Supervisors. We are also increasing communication to members of the union-provided mental health and addictions benefits available to all members of LiUNA Local 183. We would love for you to speak at this event.

Moving forward, we are planning to reach out to the WSIB to expand the focus on mental health within the Health and Safety Excellence Plan (HSEP). By working with you and government agencies, we can work together to ensure employers and their employees receive the education and assistance needed to make critical improvements and investments into the mental health of all workers with a focus on onsite construction workers.

We are appreciative that the government, through Associate Minister Michael Tibollo, and in partnership with MLTSD, have made large investments into improving access to free services.

RESCON would appreciate meeting with you and your team to discuss the above initiatives. We look forward to continued cooperation with you, the Chief Prevention Office and the Ministry of Labour.

Thank you,

Andrew Pariser
Vice-President, RESCON
Chair, Health and Safety Committee

Amina Dibe
Manager, Government and Stakeholder Relations, RESCON
Chair, Anti-Racism Roundtable