



CANADIAN ETHNIC MEDIA ASSOCIATION

24 Tarlton Road, Toronto, ON M5P 2M4

www.canadianethnicmedia.com

OPEN LETTER TO PRIME MINISTER JUSTIN TRUDEAU

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P.

Prime Minister

Office of the Prime Minister

80 Wellington Street

Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

April 7, 2020

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau,

On Friday, April 3, 2020, the Premier of Ontario Doug Ford provided sobering projections on the COVID-19 pandemic situation. He repeated the message to stay home, because "lives are on the line". You have re-iterated the same message asking everyone to continue to do their part by staying home to help flatten the curve.

How is this important message being shared and transmitted? The majority of Canadians are hearing about this regularly through national news sources on television, in print media and through the numerous public awareness announcements by the Public Health Agency of Canada. But not all Canadians and residents of Canada follow this media. What about members of ethnic communities whose first language is neither English nor French? How are they being reached?

Ethnic media is a source of message distribution which provides information to approximately 250 ethnic groups and communities in Canada. Most have their own news sources, in multiple forms - which inform their audience of local happenings and entertainment as well as important events. They have quick access to hundreds, if not tens of thousands of community members. And yet, in this incredibly trying historic time, where everyone must help and is asked to be part of the solution to this pandemic problem, they have been overlooked as a valuable resource. This resource is quickly disappearing because of the shutdowns due to the Coronavirus. Many are facing the need to close their doors due to the drying up of advertising revenue they had. And if they are at all functioning, it is largely because of a skeleton staff supported by volunteers and family. How then will they be able to distribute the message that the Prime Minister, Premier of Ontario, and the Public Health Agency of Canada and other leaders are asking of them?

Earlier in the week, you announced federal measures to cushion the impact of the COVID-19 virus on the economy and on peoples' lives. It included a \$30-million awareness advertising campaign. This funding is targeted for newspapers, broadcasters and media organizations. Was ethnic media included in this? They don't feel they were. Ethnic media is certainly entitled to a share of this and should be so informed. Not only will the funds help in distribution of important key messages, but it will provide some support and a life-line to these small community based media outlets.

We trust that Heritage Minister Steven Guilbeaut included ethnic media in his definition of diversity when he announced the campaign to raise awareness about COVID-19 "so that Canadians can continue to access diverse and reliable sources of news." The Canadian Ethnic Media Association is prepared and willing to help reach ethnic media organizations and enable them to be part of the solution.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Madeline Ziniak". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Madeline Ziniak, C.M., O.Ont.

Chair

Canadian Ethnic Media Association

cc

Premier of Ontario, Doug Ford

The Honourable Andrew Scheer, P.C., M.P., Leader of the Official Opposition

Mr. Jagmeet Singh, Leader of the New Democratic Party

The Honourable Bill Morneau, P.C., M.P.

The Honourable Steven Guilbeault, P.C, M.P.

The Honourable Patty Hajdu, P.C., M.P.