

May 20, 2020

An Open Letter to Recreation and Sport Partners:

COVID-19 continues to have a significant impact on everyone in our province, including the recreation and sport sector. People of all ages, staff and volunteers have been affected. I have been working closely with my federal counterparts to ensure that the sport and recreation sector is supported through this difficult time. In addition to programming for employers, employees and other individuals, we are currently working on details with the Government of Canada for the COVID-19 Emergency Support Fund for Cultural, Heritage and Sport Organizations, which will provide financial support for business continuity related expenses.

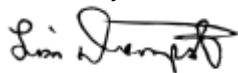
Recreation and sport plays a powerful role in helping residents of all ages lead healthy active lives and contributes to the well-being of our communities. I am heartened by the many efforts undertaken by sport and recreation partners to encourage people of all ages to remain active and healthy. There are great examples of organizations and communities using innovative technological approaches to deliver virtual healthy active living initiatives. As always, during this pandemic and going forward, the role you play is extremely important to the physical and mental health of our province and I thank you for your efforts.

I recognize that as you review information regarding the NL Life with COVID-19 plan, including the associated alert levels (www.gov.nl.ca/covi-19-alert-system/public-health-guidance-for-all-alert-levels) you likely have questions, including questions on when regular programming may resume. Officials in my department are working with the province's Chief Medical Officer of Health, public health officials, Recreation NL, Sport NL, the Aboriginal Sport and Recreation Circle NL and School Sports NL to develop guidance documents to support a return to operations. For everyone's safety, public health measures will be required to return to the delivery of recreation and sport activities and these documents will provide guidance throughout the alert levels.

While you are waiting for the guidance documents to be finalized over the next few weeks, continue to communicate with officials in my department and with provincial recreation and sport organizations with any questions or concerns. Please also continue to follow COVID-19 alerts and updates via www.gov.nl.ca/covid-19. As guidance documents are available, my staff will share them and will be available to answer any questions that you may have.

Thank you for your contributions during this unprecedented time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lisa Dempster".

LISA DEMPSTER, MHA
Cartwright – L'Anse au Clair
Minister