



# **BRIEF**

**For Presentation To**

**THE GOVERNMENT OF MANITOBA**

**The Honourable Gary Doer  
Premier**

**2006 - 2007**

**By**

**THE PROVINCIAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN OF  
MANITOBA, INC.**

**Maxine Balbon, President**

**Prepared by Mary Scott**

**September, 2007**

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PRESENTATION OF BRIEF TO THE PREMIER AND THE MANITOBA EXECUTIVE  
COUNCIL

Room 234, Legislative Building

Chair for the Executive Council  
Chair for the PCWM

Honourable Gary Doer  
Maxine Balbon

**AGENDA**

Introductions and Comments  
Introductions and Comments

Premier Gary Doer  
Mary Scott

Process of the Brief:

- a) Introduction of the Specific Section by PCWM President
- b) PCWM Background Speaker on the Issue/Resolution (2-3 minutes)
- c) Response/Dialogue with relevant Minister on Resolution (5 minutes)
- d) PCWM has appointed a timekeeper to keep track of the speakers and discussion

**Order of the Issues Under Discussion**

**Commendations**

**Reiterations**

Child Care

**Current Concerns and Government Responses**

**PCWM Resolutions**

- a. Lake Winnipeg (from AGM)
- b. Reducing Driving to Meet Kyoto Protocol Targets
- c. Pay as You Drive Insurance
- d. Reduction of Social and Economic Inequity Key To Healthy Living Strategy
- e. Increasing the number of women in non-traditional trades in Manitoba
- f. Resourcing Women's Archives

**NCWC Resolutions**

- a. Aboriginal Family Violence
- b. National Anti-Poverty Legislation
- c. Investing in Post-Secondary Education
- d. Wetlands Conservation
- e. Helping Foreign Trained Professionals Access Accreditation
- f. Protecting Farmlands in Canada
- g. Upholding the Public Health Care System: Banning Dual Practice Medicine
- h. Support for Victims of Human Trafficking

**Resolutions Chair**

Muriel Smith

**Summary**

Observers present include individual members and federate representatives of PCWM and Council of Women of Winnipeg

## **PREAMBLE**

The Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba (PCWM) is pleased to present its 2006/2007 Brief to the Government of Manitoba. Since PCWM was formed in 1949, it has brought views and concerns to the Premier and Cabinet on a regular basis, most recently in 2005. It is important to keep in mind the Council is a volunteer organization, with no paid staff, and receives no funds from government.

The Provincial Council is a federation of organizations of women, or men and women, and individual members, whose purpose is to improve the social conditions for the family and the nation by public education and representations to Government. We work by a resolution process – all resolutions are debated and voted on by each representative of a federate member of Council and then become policy. The policies you see before you in this Brief have been developed through such a process. The National Council of Women of Canada (NCWC) presents an annual Brief to the Federal Government.

The National Council of Women of Canada, founded in 1893, consists of 6 provincial groups, 38 local branches and is affiliated with 28 nationally organized societies. NCWC is a member of the International Council of Women (ICW), comprised of National Councils in over 75 countries, and has consultative status with ECOSOC, the UN's Economic and Social Council. Most recently, 2 of our members, Muriel Smith and Dr. Mary Pankiw, attended the ICW meetings in Kiev, Ukraine, representing the NCWC.

Councils of Women exist at the local, provincial, national and international levels. Although Councils have pioneered improvement of the status of Canadian women, energies are not directed exclusively to women's concerns. Rather, we respond on many issues which face civil society. Councils of Women are non-political and do not receive government funding. Our common purpose draws support from people from all parties, and from a variety of social, economic, religious and ethnic backgrounds.

The policies contained in this Brief focus on issues that are provincial in scope although they may also have national significance. They include the policies approved by PCWM since the last submission in 2005 and a selected number from NCWC, supported by all NCWC's membership at the June 2006 AGM, focusing on those with a provincial responsibility. Resolutions adopted at the June 2007 will be included in the next Brief.

# **PROVINCIAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN OF MANITOBA**

## **FEDERATE MEMBERS OF THE PROVINCIAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN OF MANITOBA, INC.**

- Autism Society of Manitoba
- Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives
- Canadian Federation of University Women – Manitoba Council
- Consumers Association of Canada (Manitoba) Inc.
- Council of Women of Winnipeg
- Elizabeth Fry Society of Manitoba
- Girl Guides of Canada, MB. Council
- Ikwe Widdjitiwin Inc.
- Immigrant Women’s Association of Manitoba, Inc.
- Interlake Women Business Owner’s
- Ka Ni Kanichihk Inc.
- Literacy Partners of Manitoba
- Manitoba Association of Home Economists
- Manitoba Association of Women & the Law
- Manitoba Association of Women’s Shelters
- Manitoba Business and Professional Women’s Clubs
- Manitoba Child Care Association
- Manitoba Dental Hygienist’s Association
- Manitoba Hydro, Employment Equity
- Manitoba/Northwestern Ontario Conference United Church Women
- Manitoba & NW Ontario Synodical Society, WMS, The Presbyterian Church in Canada
- MATCH International
- MORN (Mother Of Red Nations Women’s Council of Manitoba)
- Osborne House
- Prairie Women’s Health Centre of Excellence
- Reseau action femmes (Manitoba)
- Salvation Army
- Ukrainian Women’s Association of Canada (Mb. Branch)
- UN Platform for Action Committee, Mb.
- Wolseley Family Place
- Women’s Enterprise Centre
- Women’s Health Clinic
- Women’s Health Research Foundation of Canada

## **COUNCIL OF WOMEN OF WINNIPEG FEDERATES**

- Alpha Delta Pi Alumnae
- Alpha Gamma Delta Alumnae
- Alpha Omega Alumnae
- Altrusa International of Winnipeg
- League of Ukrainian Women in Canada
- OSU Children's Library Fund
- Retired Women's Teachers' Association
- Salvation Army Women's Ministry
- Schoolmasters' Wives Association
- Soroptimist International of Winnipeg
- Ukrainian Canadian Women's Committee
- Ukrainian Women's Association - Knahynia Olha
- Ukrainian Womens Association - Lesia Ukrainka
- Ukrainian Women's Organization
- University Women's Club of Winnipeg
- Westminster United Church - Outreach Committee
- Westworth United Church UCW
- Winnipeg General Hospital and HSC School of Nursing Alumnae
- YM-YWCA of Winnipeg
- Young United Church UCW

## **NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN OF CANADA**

### **Provincial Councils of Women**

- British Columbia
- Manitoba
- Ontario
- Quebec
- Saskatchewan

### **Local Councils of Women**

- Edmonton, AB
- Halifax, NS
- Hamilton and District, ON
- London and Area, ON
- Montreal, QC
- New Westminster, BC
- Ottawa, ON
- Prince Albert, SK
- Regina, SK
- St. Catharines & District, ON
- Saskatoon, SK
- Toronto and Area, ON
- Vancouver, BC
- Victoria, BC
- White Rock and District, BC
- Windsor, ON
- Winnipeg, MB

### **Study Groups**

- Born, PEI

### **National Organizations Affiliated with NCWC**

- Action Canada for Population and Development
- Anglican Church of Canada
- Association of Public Service Alliance Retirees

- Canadian Abortion Rights Action League
- Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies
- Canadian Council of Muslim Women
- Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs
- DES Action Canada
- Federation of Junior Leagues
- Girl Guides of Canada
- Hadassah-WIZO Organization Of Canada
- Na'amat Canada
- National Association of Women and the Law
- National Consultation of Women of the United Church
- National Women's Liberal Commission
- Planned Parenthood Federation of Canada
- Polish Canadian Women's Federation
- Polish Alliance of Canada Ladies Circle Groups 1-7
- The Salvation Army
- Ukrainian Women's Association of Canada Ukrainian Women's Organization of Canada
- Women's Missionary Society (W.D) of the Presbyterian Church in Canada
- YWCA of/du Canada

## INTRODUCTION

The Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba representing 31 Manitoba organizations has been active in a number of areas and their work, and the work of their federates, represent countless hours of volunteer time, supporting a variety of community interests and needs. In our Brief we will mention and support work done by our Federates. Some of the highlights of our actions, from 2005 to 2007 are found in Appendix one. We would like to point out in particular our presentation of a Brief to the Employment Standards Review, and our participation with the planning for the new provincial jail for women. We have recently sponsored or co-sponsored a number of public forums, most recently the Mayoralty Forum: Winnipeg 2006, and two upcoming panels during Right to Know Week.

The Ad-hoc Committee on Mental Health continues to work on a Discussion Paper from a family/client perspective. We are inviting comments to the paper to identify issues that prevent the implementation of effective reform within the mental health system.

We wish to raise our concerns today about provincial policy and action (or lack of) in a number of areas. Our Brief will focus on social and health issues, the environment, education, and comments on strengthening the interaction between groups such as the Provincial Council and government. Major points that have been raised in previous Briefs that will be raised again in this Brief, continue to focus on poverty as a key issue for women and children; sustainable land use practices; and protecting our environment.

1. Maintaining the status of Manitoba as the Child Poverty Capital of Canada. **Fact:** Manitoba has the highest percentage of households with children who have been poor since 1996 and female lone parent led families in Manitoba remain among the poorest of all families in Canada. The inadequacy of income assistance benefits and the minimum wage are significant contributors to the depth of poverty in Manitoba;
2. Continuing to work at alleviating the root causes of poverty, not just treating the symptoms;
3. The issue of violence, particularly experienced by women continues to be a concern. Violence is normalized by the experiences of Aboriginal women and must be addressed. Aboriginal women experience violence at 3X the rate of any other Canadian woman and are 5X more likely to die as a result of violence.

Other considerations:

1. Supporting government departments working together, coordinating, and sharing jurisdictional authority in a collaborative fashion;
2. Making full use of the energy, commitment, talents and skills of Manitoba women within government and on boards and task forces.
3. Ensuring fair and open government, and an opportunity for real public participation before decisions are made;
4. Recognizing the value of our natural resources and the environment and planning not just for short term gain;
5. Enforcing legislated plans and regulations already in place or when amendments are proposed, ensuring meaningful community consultation before implementation.

We wish to thank the MLAs who have taken the time to read the Brief and to set aside time to dialogue further with our members.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba, Inc., is an organization that reflects the diversity, the history, and the commitment of member organizations and individual members to improving the quality of life for Manitobans.

This Brief captures the policies that have been approved at the provincial and national level and that reflect PCWM's work since our last Brief was presented in September, 2005. During that period there has been a good working relationship with many of the provincial departments, ministers and staff.

The Brief highlights the concerns of our members, namely:

- Land Use and land use planning, particularly applying concepts of Sustainable Development. One policy is about protecting farmland, and another about wetlands conservation;
- Human Rights and Aboriginal Women, particularly violence and Aboriginal Women;
- Poverty and, in particular, the infrastructure necessary to build a more equitable society;
- Education, and in particular, investing in post-secondary education.

Our Brief, we believe can point government in the direction of a more environmentally secure province, and one that all can share.

PCWM urges the government to listen to the voices of Aboriginal women in all the decisions affecting their lives.

The health care system must be seen as more than delivery of services. It must be seen within the context of women's social and economic lives. We are particularly concerned regarding the status of midwifery services in Manitoba. More needs to be done to provide this option to all of Manitoba, including providing the necessary training and education for the midwifery profession.

Applying sustainable development principles in the planning of Manitoba urban communities is the recommended direction to follow, to make the most effective use of our resources. Enforcement of existing legislation and regulations in land use is also essential to assure fairness and public trust in all decisions.

## COMMENDATIONS

- We would like to begin with recognition of the significant support from and work by the Manitoba Women's Advisory Council and the Women's Directorate. As we see the Status of Women Canada's influence and budgets reduced, we note that Manitoba continues to maintain both these provincial agencies/departments. The outreach efforts, such as the weekly Council Currents, the Brown Bag Lunches with outstanding speakers and topics for discussion, the Round Table discussions (such as the Round Tables on Violence against Women), and the support services for community organizations, such as photocopying make an incredible difference for women and women's organizations through out the province.
- We recognize the persistent effort to protect and enhance public health care.
- We appreciate the community budget consultation process, held throughout the province.
- We note that there will be Legislation to ensure that Manitoba tax credits not be reduced as a result of federal universal child care benefit.
- We also note that there will be two new wildlife management areas designated, including Delta Marsh, and one expanded, to protect Manitoba's wildlife and wetland areas.
- We were pleased to see the Award given to the Province of Manitoba by the UN, under the category of Public Service Awards, recognizing Manitoba's pioneering domestic violence front end project and the coordination and management that the project represents.
- We note the recent announcement regarding low-income families in the north receiving increased assistance to address high cost of food and essentials. As well the announcement of the three teen clinics in the north (Thompson, Flin Flon and Cranberry Portage) is a positive move. More however, needs to be done to provide adequate, safe and affordable housing.

# 1. REITERATIONS

## 1.1 Quality Child Care

Due to the cancellation of the funding agreement on early learning and child care between the Government of Canada and the Government of Manitoba the Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba supports our Federate member, Manitoba Child Care Association of Manitoba in making the following recommendations for consideration:

- That all federal funds for early learning and childcare, whether earmarked, or through transfer payments, or captured from taxes generated from the Universal Child Care Benefit must be used by the Government of Manitoba to enhance, develop, and expand our child care system. Federal funds should supplement, not replace existing provincial spending.
- That a new action plan with specific objectives and targets be developed by the Government of Manitoba for the period 2007-2012.
- Enhancements to compensation, recruitment strategies, province wide training opportunities and training assistance for center based educators and family child care providers remain the first priority.
- The Government of Manitoba increase the maximum daily user fee for infants and preschoolers to match the child care allowance parents receive. User fees for nursery school programs should increase proportionate to the services of a part time program. This will allow service providers to increase wages and to offset inflationary increases to other areas of service delivery such as wages, staff benefit programs, rent increases, utilities, food, etc.
- The Government of Manitoba allocate some of the tax revenues it will receive from the Universal Child Care Benefit toward increasing the operating grant for school age spaces so the unit revenue for school age spaces can increase at the same level as infant and preschool.
- The Government of Manitoba ensure centers have sufficient revenue through a parent fee increase or operating grant increase, to enable the majority to:
  - \* Adopt the Minimum Salary Guideline Scale for Group Child Care Centres, Scale V
  - \* And to enable board of directors to provide an annual increment of 3% for employees up to Level 5 to recognize salary progression based on acquired experience, and thereafter an annual cost of living increase in line with the rate of inflation. The salary range for an ECE on Scale Five is \$28,705.00 - \$32,308.00.
- In 2008, the Government of Manitoba adjust funding levels so all licensed not for profit child care centres are able to pay market competitive wages and contribute to a pension fund on behalf of their employees. Thereafter, government should provide annual, predictable, funding increases that allows for wage increases in line with inflation. .
- The Government of Manitoba work with the family child care community to:

\* resolve the issue of a substantial reduction in income for the provider (\$885.00 less in operating grant) when an infant turns age two

- That funding increases to centers and providers include provision not just for wages, but also enable meaningful contributions to a retirement plan in the amount of 3-5% annually; and an annual professional development allowance of 1% of gross income.
- That ECE training incentives and support continue.
- That research is urgently needed to identify the demographics of the ECE workforce to ensure the availability of training, the incentive programs, and the volume of graduates is sufficient to meet the needs of the current and expanding system.
- The Government of Manitoba must balance the licensing of new spaces with the availability of a child care workforce.
- That a fund must be continuously available for upgrading, repair, or exceptional circumstances, not affordable from core revenue but essential as part of a quality, developmental program.
- The Government of Manitoba make available pedagogical support to licensed child care programs to support the development and implementation of educational programs for children; to design and provide educational and technical tools, to define needs concerning ECE training and continuing professional development; to write newsletter, articles and utilize other communication tools to support the provision of educational child care services; forge linkages and interact with related sectors such as Education, Citizenship, and Youth to foster an integrated approach between ELCC and education.

### **95-02 Support for Quality Child Care**

**RESOLVED** that the Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba urges the Government of Manitoba to support the goals of a fully accessible, non-profit system of comprehensive, flexible and high quality child care, worthy wages and good working conditions, funded jointly by government and parents, and be it further

**RESOLVED** that the Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba urges the Government of Manitoba to outline its plan for enhancements to the existing child care system, recognizing the current deterrents to access and affordability, and taking advantage .... of new child care funding available from the Federal Government, Human Resources and Development

## 1.2 Freedom of Information – Right to Know

**Commendation:** PCWM commends the government for acknowledging Right to Know Week last year. We welcome the September 28, 2006 press release announcing possible improvements to access to government information. Orders-in-Council made after January 1, 2007 are now posted on the government web-site. The proposed annual disclosure of ministers' individual expenses also represents a step towards more openness.

We continue to urge the Government of Manitoba to act on the other commitments it made in September 2006; on the advice that it received from the Manitoba Access to Information Network (PCWM is a member) in May 2004 during the review of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act; and on the New Democratic Party's responses to the 1999 provincial election survey, "Democracy in the New Millennium".

We urge the government to ensure that public bodies maintain a culture of openness with the maximum routine disclosure of public information and that openness (as opposed to confidentiality) clauses are written into all public-private partnership final agreements.

We urge the government to publish a full, updated hard copy of the Manitoba Government Telephone Directory. The last edition was February, 2002. The complete directory allows citizens to see the structure and organization of the government and the public service in a way that the electronic directory does not permit.

There is much work to be done to improve openness, in particular,

- to establish an Information and Privacy Commissioner with the power to order the release of information;
- to expand the public interest fee waiver provision;
- to release the results of all publicly funded polls and surveys, including those of government agencies and local authorities;
- to expand the environmental approvals public registry to include land use planning and resource allocation activities.

## 2. CURRENT CONCERNS (PCWM Policy)

### 2.1 Lake Winnipeg

Councils of Women across Canada regularly have a "common program" where all Councils study and have educational programs on issues of common concern. This year our common program is on theme of Water. This theme provided us with an opportunity at our June Annual Meeting to study and learn more about Lake Winnipeg. The AGM was actually held in Gimli, and included a tour of the research vessel the Namao. The following article, written by Dr. Diane F. Malley and Jennifer V. Lukovich, reflects some of our issues, concerns, and recommendations.

*"Called Canada's sixth Great Lake, Lake Winnipeg is the 10<sup>th</sup> largest freshwater lake in the world. Unexpectedly to most Manitobans, Lake Winnipeg is severely ecologically stressed. A report prepared by the Lake Winnipeg Implementation Committee in fall 2005, "Restoring the Health of Lake Winnipeg", available at [http://www.redriverbasincommission.org/lake\\_wpg\\_final.pdf](http://www.redriverbasincommission.org/lake_wpg_final.pdf), documents that several human influences co-occur to allow the north basin of the lake to develop massive blooms of filamentous, non-*

beneficial blue-green algae that are large enough to be seen from space. Satellite photos over the past decade show marked increases in the area of the lake covered by these blooms with time (see <http://home.cc.umanitoba.ca/%7Egmculllo/LWsat.htm>). Excess supply of phosphorus to the lake from the watershed, the second largest in North America, is a major factor.

The good news is that the lake is finally receiving the multi-disciplinary, on-going scientific attention that has been lacking since it first received serious ecological study in 1929. Since the formation of the Lake Winnipeg Research Consortium (LWRC) <http://www.lakewinnipegresearch.org/> in 1998 and their acquisition of the Motor Vessel Namao, the lake has been subject to routine lake-wide surveys in all but one year until the present. Dr. Al Kristofferson, LWRC Co-ordinator reports that the Consortium successfully carried out three whole-lake surveys in 2006. These cruises play a role in education as well as research. In 2006, a number of university and high school classes came on board for short periods. Dr. Kristofferson is cautiously optimistic that funding will be on-going for the lake-wide programs. Several partners have made multi-year commitments of funding. LWRC Science Coordinator, Alex Salki, reports that there has been a significant and welcome increase in participation in the research programs by researchers from other agencies, particularly Environment Canada, that is now the lead federal agency for both watershed and in-lake water quality research issues. The University of Regina, the International Water Institute at the University of North Dakota, and Algal-Tox International are other collaborators. A group of 40 Canadian scientists has submitted a 5-year National Large Lake research proposal that includes lakes Winnipeg, Ontario and Erie, which if successful, will substantially improve our understanding of complex Lake Winnipeg. Several scientific societies and water associations are holding meetings in Winnipeg focused on Lake Winnipeg during 2006 and 2007.

The ecological news for the lake is not so positive. For the first time, in 2006 the blue-green algal blooms were highly visible in the south basin extending at one point up to 10 miles offshore from Gimli. This newly-observed development is believed to be related to climate-related reduced sediment-bearing inflows from the Red River. This allowed the south basin to be more transparent this year, favouring increased algal growth. Less obvious to users of the lake, but important ecologically, was the increased presence of an exotic microscopic crustacean, *Eubosmina coregoni*, in the south basin.

Public awareness on the critical state of the lake is rising rapidly and people from all walks of life are coming together to become informed and take action. The Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba held a public panel on May 13, 2006 in Gimli on challenges to the quantity and quality of water in Manitoba, with emphasis on Lake Winnipeg.

In March 2006, a Lake Winnipeg Environmental Forum, "Saving Lake Winnipeg", was hosted by Dr. Jon Gerrard and the Manitoba Liberal Party, with 50 participants, for the purposes of establishing a comprehensive action plan for Lake Winnipeg. The full report is available at <http://www.manitobaliberals.ca/documents/Saving-Lake-Winnipeg-Report.pdf>. The objectives of the forum were to become informed on recent research findings on Lake Winnipeg, identify scientific indicators to monitor the health of the lake, examine best management practices (BMPs) and land use initiatives to address nutrient loading to the lake, and seek solutions by building on existing recommendations to develop an action plan for the Lake Winnipeg watershed basin. Stakeholders from agriculture, industry, government, academia, interested citizens and activists came together to highlight priority areas requiring immediate attention as well as long-term initiatives designed to reduce nutrient loading to the Lake. These included the establishment of threshold levels for P in both the Canadian and Manitoba Water Quality guidelines, the need for federal involvement in establishing an action plan for the Lake Winnipeg watershed, legislation that requires companies to ban phosphates in dishwashing detergents, an initiative that will be presented by Dr. Gerrard in the next Manitoba legislative session, legislation that bans the cosmetic use of fertilizers, and ongoing research on BMPs. It was also suggested that an all-party task force be established with the intent of garnering federal and provincial support for the Healthy Lake Winnipeg Charter, as outlined in the "Restoring the Health of Lake Winnipeg" report."

## 2.2 Reducing Driving to meet Kyoto Protocol Targets

### Introduction

Global warming is perhaps the most serious threat to our planet. There are very few scientists who continue to resist the overwhelming evidence that human activity is driving climate change. The change appears to be happening even faster than scientists at first feared. The signs are unmistakable. The collapse of a huge ice shelf off Ellesmere Island is an ominous sign of the looming problem in the Canadian Arctic. Species are threatened as is the way of life of aboriginal peoples.

The average motor vehicle puts its weight in carbon into the atmosphere each year. In Manitoba motor vehicles are responsible for between 28 and 34% of all green house gases. If we are serious about tackling the problem of global warming, we will have to make our vehicles even more efficient, look for alternative fuels and encourage alternative means of transportation to meet Kyoto protocol targets.

### Background to the Resolution:

- The world as we know it (a world compatible with human life) is threatened by global warming due to human generation of greenhouse gases which trap heat waves within the earth's atmosphere;
- The increase of temperature of one degree Celsius is now inevitable, but a catastrophic increase of 2C is still avoidable if all the nations of the world work together to drastically reduce their emissions;
- Our social and economic world is highly dependent upon the burning of fossil fuels, which not only contributes to global warming but also puts us on an unsustainable trajectory with demand for oil increasing globally and supply peaking and about to decline;
- The problems posed by the intertwined issues of global warming and declining fuel reserves will necessitate changes in the behaviour of everyone, not just corporations, businesses and institutions;
- Road transportation is the single largest source of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in Manitoba, being responsible for 6600 kilotonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> or 31% of GHG, and emissions have actually increased by 5.7% from 1990 levels Manitoba Energy, Science and Technology - ([www.gov.mb.ca/est/ghg/transp.html](http://www.gov.mb.ca/est/ghg/transp.html));
- The Government of Manitoba has committed itself to meeting and exceeding the targets of the Kyoto Protocol by 2012;

Resolved that the Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba adopt as its policy that the Government of Manitoba should take steps to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases by the transportation sector by encouraging citizens to drive their cars less and by promoting and supporting alternative fuels and alternative means of transportation; and be it further

Resolved that in the interest of reducing emissions of greenhouse gases the Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba ask the Government of Manitoba to find ways to encourage citizens to drive their cars less and to promote and support use of alternative fuels and alternative means of transportation

## **2.3 Pay As You Drive Insurance**

### **Introduction**

So much of the cost of driving a car consists of fixed costs that with every kilometre driven the cost per kilometre decreases, giving the car owner every incentive to drive more. It is impossible to get rid of all the fixed costs, but insurance, currently a fixed cost, could be converted to a cost that varies with the distance driven. This would give the quickest and easiest feedback concerning the cost of driving. Unfortunately there are other external costs that are not borne by the driver but by the planet and all of the creatures on it. If we are serious about protecting our planet, we have to get serious about reducing driving. Short of draconian regulations like rationing gasoline, we have to rely on incentives to promote a change in behaviour. Pay-as-you-drive insurance could be incentive pushing drivers toward driving less.

The Public Utilities Board has recently asked Manitoba Public Insurance to look into PAYD, and the corporation has already expressed its willingness to do just that. We would like to see MPI go further and offer PAYD as an option, at least on a trial basis. World wide there are a number of private companies that offer PAYD as an option, including Aviva in Ontario.

There is no denying that PAYD is controversial, even among our members. Rural drivers fear that they would bear the burden, but we are not asking that all of the other classifications of drivers be abolished. There should still be rural and urban rates and rates customized to reflect the driving record of the insured driver. All of these risk factors would remain, but the distance driven would be added to that number. Opponents of PAYD often make contradictory arguments. On the one hand they argue that those who drive seldom are less skilled and more prone to accidents. On the other hand, they argue that when all of the lower risk drivers (those who drive fewer miles) are removed from the base, their rates will go up. They can't have it both ways. If in fact PAYD removes the bad drivers from the base, their rates would actually go down. However, if those who drive less actually pose less of a risk, their rates will go up, but only in relation to the degree that they were being subsidized. We believe that it is not just to force some drivers to subsidize others, particularly when these drivers are exemplifying the kind of behaviour (driving less) that we would want to support. Even rural drivers could reduce their driving through carpooling and better planning to reduce the number of necessary trips into town.

Todd Litman of the Victoria Transport Policy Institute estimates that "PAYD is likely to significantly reduce crashes and claim costs, by 10-15%. Because it gives higher risk motorists the greatest incentive to reduce their mileage, it should provide a greater

than proportional reduction in crashes (i.e., each 1% reduction in mileage should provide more than a 1% reduction in crashes, claims and casualties. In addition to reducing crash risk for the motorists who reduce their mileage, this also reduces crash risk to other road users. MPI therefore has a much greater reason to support PAYD, compared with other insurance companies that only cover a minor portion of the market, because it will capture all of those savings, both internal (to those who choose PAYD) and external (other road users).” If Todd Litman is right, all drivers, rural an urban would be the beneficiaries and over all costs would be reduced.

There are both environmental and equity reason for wanting PAYD to be offered as an option, at least on a trial basis.

**Background to the Resolution:**

- Some private automobile insurers in other jurisdictions have offered as an option pay-as-you-drive insurance;
- Tying the cost of insurance to the miles driven would be an incentive for individuals to drive their cars less and to look for alternative modes of transportation for at least some of their trips;

Car owners who drive less currently are subsidizing those in the same risk category who drive more, which violates the principle of fairness as well as encouraging environmentally unsustainable behaviour; therefore be it

**Resolved** that the Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba adopt as policy support for pay-as-you-drive insurance as an option to car owners; and be it further

**Resolved** that the Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba ask the Public Utilities Board of Manitoba to require the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation to introduce a pay-as-you-drive form of insurance as an option to car owners.

**2.4 Reduction of Social and Economic Inequity**

Background:

In 2002, the **Women’s Health Clinic** undertook a study of the connections between income and women’s health. (<http://www.womenshealthclinic.org>) The Report was entitled: *Women, Income and Health in Manitoba*. The study grew out of concern that health reform might not pay sufficient attention to gender aspects. They identified statistics showing the incidence of Manitoba women’s poverty relative to men’s being greater in all classifications:

adult men	13.5%	adult women	20%
senior men	13.6%	senior women	28.3%
single senior men	25.6%	single senior women	51%+

They also found that women access the health system more:

- as they age and because average life expectancies differ:  
men --75.7 years; women 81.4 years

- when they are pregnant - user fees in some jurisdictions deter poor women from seeking timely health care, often jeopardizing the health of their babies;
- as gatekeepers of family health – the one exception may be poor women with limited incomes who often put the needs of their children ahead of their own.

The findings of the study were:

- that user fees would hurt women more than men;
- that prevention is the best way to improve health and reduce health costs – reducing income inequalities and redesigning health care services to meet the needs of low-income women;
- that health status varied with income, the poorest women having the poorest health status, the highest income having the best, with middle income women's health status falling in between;

They also found that **international studies** had identified income and education as major determinants of women's health. Further, they found a social effect. In developed nations, greater income disparities were associated with poorer overall population health as even the wealthier people got sick and died sooner. **A federal-provincial-territorial study** in Canada found that **population health depended not on average income but on the degree of income disparity**.

In the search for the ways in which inadequate income negatively affected health status, they identified the following factors:

- lack of access to affordable housing, transportation, food, and non-insured benefits such as medications;
- social isolation;
- economic security and social support were found to be more important than medical services *per se*;
- being a member of certain groups:  
aboriginal women develop chronic conditions earlier and suffer more frequently from heart problems, hypertension, diabetes, arthritis and rheumatism; older women's health is often affected by poor housing, higher heating costs, increased isolation, fear for personal safety, and functional impairments.

Recommendations for action included:

- making health services more accessible to low income women;
- ensuring policy makers in other sectors – banking, transportation, communications, social services, housing, the private sector and government – incorporate policies and programs that will assist low income women overcome multiple disparities.

In 2005, **CRIAW** (Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women) (<http://www.criaw-icref.ca>) published a fact sheet on *Women and Poverty*. They identified many more factors among groups of women affecting their health – age, race, ethnicity, linguistic background, ability, sexual orientation, citizenship etc. – but demonstrated that in all cases women's health status is inferior to that of men in the same group. They particularly examined the situations with aboriginal women, women of colour, immigrant women, migrant women, low wage earners, and women on welfare and their children. In

examining the **structural reasons** for these differences, they cited the presence of children, more so than age, marriage or education. **Stereotypical divisions of work** relating to **unpaid child care and housework** limited women's access to good paying, permanent jobs and benefits. Ongoing **labour market segregation** of women in jobs that were considered "women's work" and hence lower paying, often part time and without benefits – health care, teaching, clerical, sales and service – further aggravated the gender disparities. Over a lifetime, most women also had **less ability to save** or acquire pension entitlements, setting them up for poverty in their senior years.

Social attitudes and these economic realities contributed to many women having disproportionately high levels of **mental illness**, and more vulnerability to infectious and chronic diseases, violence and abuse, and to exploitation by criminals.

These two studies provide the background to demonstrate that **women's health needs can best be met by a systemic combination of positive gender sensitive social and economic measures, and not solely by focusing on individual behaviours such as smoking and diet**. The hope is that Manitoba's Healthy Living Strategy will incorporate such systemic initiatives that will address the underlying causes of the poor health status of poor women, and not merely the symptoms.

- Poverty is increasingly being feminized, particularly for young mothers and senior unattached women,
- Poor people disproportionately bear the burden of ill health,
- Income inequities affect the health status of all members of society,
- Manitoba has committed itself to a Healthy Living Strategy, one that is very focused on individual behaviours, such as smoking and weight, even though many of these behaviours are responses to social conditions and economic inequities.

Directly related to the topic of poverty, there are resolutions noted later in the Brief: **Anti Poverty Legislation (p. 25), Investing in Post-Secondary Education (p. 26) & Helping Foreign Trained Professionals (p. 27)**.

**Resolved** that Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba urge the Government of Manitoba, as part of its Healthy Living Strategy, to follow the lead of other jurisdictions such as Scotland and Quebec and **implement policies which would seek to reduce social and economic inequities**. Elements of this plan would include:

1. a commitment to ensuring that efforts to balance the budget do not unequally affect the poor, particularly poor women;
2. an action plan to reduce poverty by increasing minimum wage, welfare payments, subsidies for the working poor, and services such as accessible health care, transportation, banking and affordable drugs so women may better meet their needs;
3. investments in supplies of affordable housing and appropriate training programs; and be it further

**Resolved** that Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba urge the Government of Manitoba to require both **Health Impact Assessments and Gender Impact Analysis** as part of the planning cycle of the government and its agencies in order to improve public health through greater social and economic equity.

## 2.5 Increasing the Number of Women Apprentices in Non-Traditional Trades in Manitoba:

PCWM urges the Government to have more programs to encourage women to take apprenticeship training; to support women taking apprenticeship training and to encourage journeypersons and potential employers to overcome traditional stereotypical attitudes.

- PCWM recognizes that Manitoba faces a growing shortage of trained trades people
- Women are a disproportionately represented in lower paying jobs; only 1.5% of women are employed in trades compared to 25% of men
- Trades offer women better paid and more stable employment opportunities
- Many journeypersons retain traditional attitudes to women entering their trades
- Where women have been able to secure apprenticeships, they have been able to complete their programs and succeed in the labour market; during World war II women functioned effectively in welding, electronics, munitions and the railway

To encourage more women to consider trades training, Government can help by:

- Encouraging elementary and junior high schools to include exposure to trades skills and career opportunities
- Preparing brochures and audio-visual aids for high school guidance counselors that present the trades as attractive and well remunerated careers
- Providing pre-trades training in women-friendly ways and settings
- Mandating colleges that provide apprenticeship programs to develop special supports for women and to encourage journeypersons to take them on
- Working with employers and unions to ensure receptivity to women trades persons
- Creating an interdepartmental Task Force to track progress made in attracting, training and retaining more women into apprenticeship
- Reconstituting a Women in Trades support group

**Resolved** that the Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba adopt as policy support increasing the numbers of women entering and completing apprenticeship programs in non-traditional trades; and be it further

**Resolved** that the Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba ask the Government of Manitoba through the appropriate Departments to increase the numbers of women in and completing non-traditional trades apprenticeship programs by:

1. encouraging exposure of elementary and junior high school students to trades skills and career opportunities,
2. preparing brochures and audio-visual aids for high school guidance counselors to use in presenting apprenticeship as attractive and well remunerated career options to young women;
3. offering pre-trades training to women interested in pursuing apprenticeship careers;
4. mandating colleges that provide apprenticeship academic programs to develop special supports for women entering non-traditional apprenticeship programs, and to reach out to journeypersons to take on women apprentices;
5. working with employers and unions to ensure receptivity to women workers, members and colleagues; and by
6. creating an interdepartmental Task Force to track progress made in attracting, training and retaining more women into apprenticeship programs, evaluating program strengths and weaknesses, and adapting programs to the particular needs of women.
7. Reconstituting a Women In Trades support group.

## 2.6 Resourcing Women's Archives

PCWM believes there is a deficit of women's historical materials, and that Manitoba Archives is the natural location for such resources. However, at the current time, insufficient resources are committed to securing and archiving women's history, including that of women's organizations. PCWM urges the Government of Manitoba to allocate increased human and physical resources for the acquisition, cataloguing and archiving of women's history materials.

**Resolved** that the Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba agrees that the archiving of women's history, including that of Manitoba women's organizations, should be given higher priority;

**Resolved** that the Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba ask the Government of Manitoba to increase the human and physical resources allocated to the acquisition, cataloguing and archiving of women's history, including that of Manitoba women's organizations.

## 3.1 Protection For Aboriginal Women And Children From Family Violence

### Background:

It has long since been recognized that Aboriginal women are the most vulnerable and marginalized women within Canadian society, particularly with respect to violence. Violence against Aboriginal women must be considered a human rights issue and both the violence itself and the official response to this violence must be addressed.

In the *Stolen Sisters: Discrimination and Violence Against Indigenous Women in Canada Report*, Amnesty International states that "...both the perpetrators of violence against women and those who administer the criminal justice system – judges, prosecutors, police – often hold the pervasive view that women are responsible for violence committed against them or that they deserve to be punished for non-conforming behaviour..." The report goes on to speak to the "*unsympathetic or sceptical response*" that Aboriginal women often experience when they report that they have been victims of a violent crime. The lack of appropriate response normalizes the behaviour and women simply do not report the crimes.

In March 2005, Mother of Red Nations Women's Council of Manitoba hosted a conference on violence against Aboriginal women in Winnipeg, Manitoba. 123 individuals attended the conference with the majority of the participants coming from Manitoba. These community women identified the sources of violence against Aboriginal women as colonization, historical cultural-political events, cultural oppression, and racism. Canada's Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) confirms these sources and states that violence often takes place in a context shaped by the power that the dominant society has wielded "over every aspect of their lives, from the way they are educated and the way they can earn a living to the way they are governed..."

In traditional Aboriginal societies, women occupied a sacred and honoured place as life-givers and as decision-makers. Women were neither above nor below men, but worked in concert with men in accordance with a cultural value system to maintain the strength and

health of the community. Colonization disrupted this sacred balance and replaced it with a hierarchical social and political structure, which placed women at the lowest order. This order was further embedded in Aboriginal people during significant historical cultural-political events, such as the treaty making process, when the Crown negotiated only with men, and the residential school era, when foreign values were imposed upon Aboriginal children to replace cultural values.

The displacement of cultural values is a significant source of the violence Aboriginal women and children experience. The lack of knowledge of Aboriginal culture and issues by the mainstream are other significant sources of violence and obstacles to effectively resolve this problem.

A significant risk factor for violence for any population is low socio-economic status. A wide socio-economic gap continues to persist between Aboriginal peoples and the mainstream. This is evident by the most recent United Nations Human Development Index ranking, which measures the development including socio-economic status, of UN member-states. Canada continues to rank at the top of this index while First Nations rank alongside developing countries.

Through research being conducted by the Sisters In Spirit Campaign and the ongoing work of The Native Women's Association of Canada and Mother of Red Nations Women's Council of Manitoba, the socio-economic issues/barriers that Aboriginal women continue to experience on a daily basis are still at a crisis point and contribute directly to the violence experienced by Aboriginal women. This research indicates:

- The female Aboriginal population is young, with 32% of Aboriginal females less than 15 years of age in 2001. 19% of Aboriginal women 15 years or older are leading families, compared with 8% for non-Aboriginal women;
- Aboriginal women can expect to live 76.8 years on average, versus 82 years for non-Aboriginal women;
- The fertility rate of Aboriginal women is 2.6 children, versus 1.5 for non-Aboriginal women;
- Aboriginal women are three times more likely than non-Aboriginal women to suffer violence against women, including serious forms of life-threatening violence and emotional abuse at the hands of a marital or common-law partner;
- 21% of Aboriginal female victims of spousal abuse suffer from depression as a result of their victimization;
- Elder abuse is becoming more commonplace in Aboriginal communities;
- 87% of Aboriginal women lived with family members in 2001. Because most reserves do not have shelters, women fleeing violence often escape to a friend and relative's home. This exacerbates overcrowding on reserves;
- 4 in 10 Aboriginal women have not completed high school, whereas the figure was 29% among non-Aboriginal women;
- "Pregnancy and the need to care for children" was cited as the main reason Aboriginal women aged 15 – 19 living off-reserve quit high school;
- Of Aboriginal women aged 25 to 44 living off-reserve who had started, but not completed a post-secondary program, 34% cited "family responsibilities" as their reason for not completing, while 21% reported "financial reasons.";
- 57% of Aboriginal women with jobs work part-time and/or part-year;

- Aboriginal women with jobs are most concentrated in low-paying occupations: 60% worked either in sales, service, or in business finance, or administrative jobs;
- 27% of income for Aboriginal women comes from unemployment insurance and social welfare benefits; and
- The rate of suicide is three times the national average for Aboriginal women, compared with non-Aboriginal women.

During the March 2005 conference on violence against Aboriginal women hosted by Mother of Red Nations Women's Council of Manitoba (MORN), a number of recommendations were made. MORN acknowledges these recommendations from grassroots women as well as the recommendations of Amnesty International in the Stolen Sisters Report and the recommendations of the Policy Forum on Aboriginal Women and Violence: Building Safe and Healthy Families and Communities, held in Ottawa on March 27 and 28, 2006 and offers the following recommendations:

- **All levels of government, including Aboriginal governance structures, need to acknowledge the seriousness of the problem.** The high rates of violence against Aboriginal should be publicly condemned and plans to address the crisis should be made public. This needs to include a review of the outstanding recommendations from Canadian commissions, inquiries and inquests pertaining to the safety and welfare of Aboriginal women and children with a view to ensuring their timely implementation.
- **Support research into the extent and causes of violence against Aboriginal women.** The federal government should continue to fund initiatives like the Sisters In Spirit campaign and the Manitoba Government should fund similar research in Manitoba through Aboriginal women's organizations like Mother of Red Nations Women's Council of Manitoba.
- **Federal, provincial and territorial governments should ensure adequate, sustained, multi-year funding to ensure the provision of culturally appropriate services such as shelters and counselling for Aboriginal women and girls.**
- **All policing agencies (e.g. RCMP, Band Constables, Winnipeg Police Services, etc.) must be full partners in any initiative that examines and works to improve victim services and other violence issues.** Victims must be confident that legal protections and processes are in place, and are expedient, respectful and just. Policing agencies must work closely with Aboriginal women's organizations and frontline groups to identify and implement appropriate and effective protocols for action on missing persons cases, with a view to developing standards for police response in keeping with the risks to Aboriginal women and girls and should provide specialized staffing to review and coordinate responses to missing persons cases.
- **Provide training and resources for police to make prevention of violence against Aboriginal women a genuine priority.** All police officers must receive training to ensure an understanding of violence against women in a range of settings including family violence, child sexual exploitation and violence against women in the sex trade.
- **Any initiative must engage and be accountable to Aboriginal women who are the beneficiaries.** This includes funding and structural developments to engage Aboriginal women in the design, implementation, and evaluation of such an initiative;
- **Building the capacity of community women and survivors of abuse as supports to other Aboriginal women must be a goal of any initiative to end**

**violence against women.** This type of capacity building ensures sustainability and cultural appropriateness.

- **Establish linkages between on-reserve social program supports and off-reserve service providers, whether they are non-profit organizations or various levels of government.** The Institute of Urban Studies, the AMC and the Manitoba Métis Federation partnered in a urban (Winnipeg) mobility study in 2004 which documented the high mobility rate of First Nations from the reserve to Winnipeg. Preliminary findings of a 2004 AMC Urban quality of life indicators project indicate that First Nations people turn to their own government (i.e. First Nations governments) and institutions to improve their life situations in the city. Together, these studies indicate that linkages and partnerships between on-and – off-reserve agencies and all levels of government. In 2005, the AMC established the EAGLE Urban Transition Centre in Winnipeg to provide support and advocacy for First Nations people moving to the city and MORN established the Transition Resource Centre to provide gender specific referral resource and advocacy to Aboriginal women and their families who are in transition, in crisis, or who need support navigating through social systems. These centres provide great potential to disseminate information about and provide referrals to resources in the city.
- **An inventory of resources throughout the province is required including an assessment of their cultural content, service provision and utilization, and client satisfaction.** It is clear that cultural-appropriateness is needed to effectively address the issue of violence against Aboriginal women. In order to make effective improvements or changes, it needs to be identified if these types of supports are lacking and alternatively where they are implemented and are working;
- **The scope of stakeholders in any initiative to address the issue of violence against Aboriginal women must be broad enough so that we can get the required information to develop an effective and comprehensive plan of action to effectively address this issue.** This recommendation is in tandem with the previous recommendation. In order to get the information required to find out what is and is not working to address this issue, non-profits, charitable and other organizations and agencies providing support to Aboriginal women utilizing those supports must be engaged.
- **Intergovernmental and interdepartmental (including all levels of government) discussions are required to clarify jurisdictional issues and to seek more effective program and service delivery and funding arrangements. Data collection, sharing, and analysis is an integral part of capturing the actual scope of violence against First Nations and Aboriginal women and progress made on eliminating it, and therefore, requires partnerships across many agencies and all governments.**

<b>Resolved #1</b>	<b>that the National Council of Women of Canada adopt as policy support for the development of more safe houses/shelters, on and off reserve, including improved services and programs in their own culture and traditions, for aboriginal women and their children who are victims of family violence; and be it further</b>
<b>Resolved #2</b>	<b>that the National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to work with provincial and territorial governments and with aboriginal organizations and governing bodies to develop and fund more safe houses/shelters, on and off reserve, including programs and services that respect aboriginal culture and traditions, for aboriginal women and their children who are victims of family violence; and be it further</b>
<b>Resolved #3</b>	<b>that the National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to engage stakeholders to successfully address the underlying issues contributing to the high rate of family violence within the Aboriginal community, and to increase the capacity of Aboriginal women to break the cycle of family violence.</b>

## **3.2 National Anti Poverty Legislation**

### **Background:**

- Poverty is an underlying cause of marginalization and social exclusion which undermines the social fabric of any society; and
- Canada was rebuked by the UN Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) Committee (January 2004) for economic policies that exacerbate the serious gap between the rich and the poor; and
- On November 24, 1989, the Parliament of Canada passed an all-party resolution, unanimously, to eradicate Child Poverty within ten years; and
- Quebec's National Assembly committed "to making poverty reduction an explicit and central policy priority" by passing unanimously Bill 112, Anti-Poverty Law in December 2002; and
- Canada has supported the adoption of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, but to date has not taken strong action to implement measures that would eliminate serious poverty suffered by some Canadians;

<b>Resolved #1</b>	<b>that the National Council of Women of Canada adopt as policy support for the development and promotion of national anti-poverty legislation; and be it further</b>
<b>Resolved #2</b>	<b>that the National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to collaborate with Provincial and Territorial governments and with aboriginal organizations and governing bodies, and to consult with civil society to develop anti-poverty legislation that includes a strategy to eliminate poverty by addressing the systemic barriers to full social participation by all Canadians and which contains accountability measures for government; and be it further</b>
<b>Resolved #3</b>	<b>that the National Council of Women of Canada urge its federates, especially the Provincial and Local Councils of Women, to work with their respective governments to develop and pass anti-poverty legislation; and be it further</b>
<b>Resolved #4</b>	<b>that the National Council of Women of Canada request the International Council of Women to:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>a. adopt as policy support for the development and the promotion of international anti-poverty legislation; and</b></li> <li><b>b. urge their federated National Councils of Women to request their national governments to develop and pass anti-poverty legislation in support of the UN Millennium Goals.</b></li> </ul>

### **3.3 Investing in Post-Secondary Education**

#### **Background**

- A well-educated population contributes to Canada’s social, environmental and economic well-being; and
- A post-secondary education helps graduates reach their full potential and secure their future well-being; and
- Post-secondary education has become prohibitively costly for many high school graduates from middle-income and low-income families, preventing some from seeking further education, and forcing others to assume unreasonable levels of debt; and
- Although some provinces provide grants for low-income students, there is inadequate help for students from middle-income families; and while the federal government has also increased loan limits, this adds to the debt load; and
- There is little coordination in education funding between Canadian provinces and the federal government; therefore be it

<b>Resolved #1</b>	<b>that NCWC adopt as policy that post-secondary education be affordable and accessible to all qualified residents of Canada; and be it further</b>
<b>Resolved #2</b>	<b>that the National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to work with the Provinces and Territories to develop a national post-secondary student funding plan that ensures affordable and accessible post-secondary education for all qualified residents of Canada.</b>

### 3.4 Wetlands Conservation

#### **Background:**

- Wetlands are among the most important ecosystems on earth; and
- Wetlands have economic benefits; and
- Wetlands are important as accumulators and purifiers of water to feed all the aquifers, a carbon sink, a place of recreation, habitat for many different types of plants and animals including endangered species; and
- The Ramsar Convention, which the Government of Canada signed in 1981, is an intergovernmental treaty for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources

PCWM supports the conservation of wetlands as among earth's most important ecosystems: they provide economic benefits by accumulating and purifying water, feeding all aquifers, and acting as carbon sinks and habitat for many plants and animals, including endangered species. In 1981, Canada signed the Ramsar Convention that called for the conservation of any wetland and its buffers that met one or more of the criteria listed. PCWM urges the province to preserve such wetlands and their buffers, and to identify them to be listed in the Ramsar Convention.

<b>Resolved #1</b>	<b>that the National Council of Women of Canada adopt as policy that wetlands that meet one or more of the criteria listed in the Ramsar Convention including adequate buffers be conserved; and be it further</b>
<b>Resolved #2</b>	<b>that the National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to</b> a) <b>work with provincial and territorial governments and local authorities to preserve wetlands that meet one or more of the criteria listed in the Ramsar Convention and adequate buffers</b> b) <b>continue to identify important wetlands and nominate them to be designated under the Ramsar Convention; and be it further</b>
<b>Resolved #3</b>	<b>that the National Council of Women of Canada request all Provincial and Local Councils of Women to urge their respective governments to conserve wetlands and adequate buffers.</b>

### 3.5 Helping Foreign Trained Professionals Access Accreditation

#### **Background:**

- In 2003 The National Council of Women of Canada adopted policy entitled "Helping Foreign-Trained Health Care Professionals Access Accreditation"; and
- Other foreign-trained professionals besides health care workers have trouble finding jobs in their field, e.g. engineers, Information Technology professionals, teachers, because the licensing bodies of professional organizations do not accept the foreign credentials and work experience of immigrants; and
- Although standard tests for accreditation have been set up in most professions, fees for these qualifying examinations are high and may be unaffordable for some immigrants; and

- Foreign-trained professionals find it difficult to obtain the necessary Canadian experience in their field; and
- Foreign-trained women professionals face additional barriers to gaining accreditation, such as affordable and available child care;

**Resolved #1** that the National Council of Women of Canada adopt as policy that the process of accreditation for all professionals trained in other countries be made more accessible and affordable to those professionals, while ensuring that a uniform standard of competence is maintained across Canada; and be it further

**Resolved #2** that the National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to work with the provincial and territorial governments, professional organizations and licensing bodies to make accreditation more accessible and affordable for all foreign-trained professionals, while ensuring that a uniform standard of competence is maintained across Canada by:

- a) ensuring loans and other resources are available for qualifying examinations and upgrading;
- b) developing academic assessment tools and testing;
- c) ensuring re-testing is accessible and affordable;
- d) increasing the opportunities for foreign-trained professionals to acquire more Canadian experience under supervision; and
- e) accelerating the accreditation and retraining process through English and French language training, including long term and/or immersion language training where necessary
- f) taking into account the barriers women face, such as lack of child care; and be it further

**Resolved #3** that the National Council of Women of Canada request its Provincial and Local Councils to urge their respective governments to:

- a) ensure loans and other resources are accessible and affordable for qualifying examinations and upgrading;
- b) develop academic assessment tools and testing;
- c) ensure re-testing is accessible and affordable;
- d) increase the opportunities for foreign-trained professionals to acquire more Canadian experience under supervision

### 3.6 Protecting Farmlands in Canada

#### Background:

- NCWC supported a Land Use and Land Use Planning Study policy in 1974 which called for an NCWC study "Land Use and Land Use Planning" to be prepared for presentation to the ICW Triennial in Vancouver; and in 1977 NCWC approved Land Use Planning for Canada which called for all levels of government to ensure future production of agricultural products, by creating rational zoning for land with high potential for agricultural production; In 1982 Land Use and Land Use Planning called for the Provincial and Local Councils of Women urge their respective governments to establish independent Agricultural Resource and Land Use Conservation boards to ensure that short term pressures on prime land are balanced by long term concern for food supply; (using the following means)
  - \*to enact legislation restricting land use according to soil value
  - \*develop programs of public awareness concerning land use;
- In 2002, Transit policy called for a limit to urban sprawl...planning for development of housing close to workplaces, and public transportation, mixed use zoning and discouragement of low density housing; and
- Very little of Canada's land is suitable for agriculture and urbanization has resulted in a significant loss of prime farmlands in Canada over many years; and

- In the past Canada has shown concern for protecting and conserving prime farmland, in order to protect our food supplies and, until 1984 monitored the loss of prime foodlands; and
- Some Federal government infrastructure policies and investments have been directed to urban intensification, with an emphasis on environmentally sustainable municipal infrastructure that results in cleaner air, cleaner water, and reduced greenhouse gas emissions, but are not specifically directed at prime farmland retention, and some could encourage sprawl; and
- Across Canada, there is 30 years' worth of land for new housing within built-up areas and designated growth areas; and: restricting urban sprawl protects prime farmland, as well as , the fiscal and environmental benefits of providing infrastructure and services for concentrated populations.

PCWM supports the protection of prime farmland and the sustainable urban intensification, and opposes land use policies and investments that encourage urban sprawl, promote highway development and other urban uses on prime farmlands.

<b>Resolved #1</b>	<b>that the National Council of Women of Canada adopt as policy that prime farmland be protected and that government policy and investments discourage urban sprawl and promote intensification; and be it further</b>
<b>Resolved #2</b>	<b>that the National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to monitor the loss of prime farmland and ensure that its policies, programs and investments will help all levels of government sport sustainable urban intensification and discourage sprawl and highways and other urban uses that will destroy prime farmlands; and be it further</b>
<b>Resolved #3</b>	<b>that the National Council of Women of Canada urge its Provincial and Local Councils of Women to encourage provincial, territorial and municipal governments to support urban intensification projects; discourage sprawl and the building of new highways and other urban uses on prime farmlands.</b>

### **3.7 Upholding the Public Health Care System: Banning Dual Practice Medicine**

#### **Background:**

- At present provincial health insurance plans forbid doctors to offer services privately that they also offer under the public insurance plan; and
- The province of Alberta has now announced its intention to allow dual practice, i.e., to allow doctors to work both inside and outside the publicly funded system, and other provinces may follow suit; and

- Private remuneration will be higher than that available to doctors through the public system, with the result that patients able to pay private fees may take priority over patients covered by public health insurance; and
- Equal access to care as set out in the Canada Health Act will no longer be a reality; and
- Any parallel private system for delivering health services covered by the Canada Health Act will weaken the public health care system because it will, of necessity, draw medical personnel from the public system.

### **Private Health Insurance**

PCWM urges the Government of Manitoba not to permit the development of private health insurance for health care services already covered under the Canada Health Act.

### **Practice Upholding the Public Health Care System: Banning Dual Medicine**

PCWM urges the Government of Manitoba to ban dual practice medicine and uphold the principle that physicians not be allowed to work in both public and private health care systems for medical acts or procedures covered by funding under the provisions of the Canada Health Act. PCWM believes such a ban will prevent a drain on scarce health personnel from the public to the private system that could offer higher salaries by serving only better off Manitobans who would have a greater ability to pay.

<b>Resolved #1</b>	<b>that the National Council of Women of Canada adopt as policy support for a ban on dual practice for medical acts or procedures already covered by funding under the provisions of the Canada Health Act; and be it further</b>
<b>Resolved #2</b>	<b>that the National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to work with the provinces, territories, and other mandated governing bodies to uphold the principle that physicians not be allowed to work in both public and private health care systems for medical acts or procedures covered by funding under the provisions of the Canada Health Act.</b>

## **3.8 Support for Victims of Human Trafficking**

### **Background:**

- Between 700,000 and 4 million people are trafficked annually worldwide; many of these numbers being women and children who have been sexually trafficked;
- At least 600 foreign women and girls are coerced into joining the Canadian sex trade each year by human traffickers and another 2200 newcomers to Canada are smuggled into the United States and Canada to work in brothels, sweatshops, domestic jobs, and construction work;
- Canada played a significant role in developing the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, signed it in December 2000 and was the first to ratify it in May 2002;

- Canada has implemented parts of the protocol dealing with punishing traffickers (that is, through The Legislation against Human Trafficking Bill, passed through Parliament in November 2005) but has not implemented those parts of the protocol dealing with protection of trafficked persons;
- The Canadian justice system and immigration system have failed so far to address the needs of trafficking victims;

### **Recommendations**

We commend the government on the Sexually Exploited Youth Campaign of "Stop Sex With Kids" and associated initiatives. The posters are visible and carry an important message.

But there needs to be work in the following areas:

■..... Trafficked persons and others escaping the sex trade need real, meaningful and positive alternatives made available to them so that restoration is possible. (Safe houses, transition houses, appropriate addiction treatment facilities that address the addiction along with the exploitation and trauma.)

■..... Efforts could be made to reduce the stigma of those who are sexually exploited, trafficked or other, upholding the dignity and worth of all. It is not necessarily that the "woman or girl" made bad choices. More likely it was a lack of alternatives. Address such things as poverty and discrimination (race and gender) we will also address H.T. and sexual exploitation in general.

■..... Work could be done towards the decriminalization of the survivors of trafficking, as well as regularizing their immigration status in Canada. (The Swedish Model where buying sex is illegal but selling it is not) This allows for the shift in thinking that needs to take place by society as a whole where "she" is viewed as "bad" and "he" is viewed as just being a bit wild. Women are not commodities to be bought or sold for any reason.

■..... The Salvation Army (a PCWM federate) maintains that there is a direct connection between sexual trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation (prostitution, pornography, etc.) and that reducing/eliminating one will directly influence the other. It is not a matter of "choice" or "consent". There are those who do enjoy doing Sex "Work", but those numbers are few compared to those who are there being victimized and exploited and can not get out.

■..... Education is needed around the harm of trafficking as well as the harm of commercial sexual exploitation, in general.

■..... There needs to be more resources for those who are purchasing sex and want to stop.

**RESOLVED 1:** that the National Council of Women of Canada adopt as policy its support for victims of human trafficking in keeping with the principles and purposes set out in the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and to the Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of Prostitution of Others; and be it further

**Resolved #2** that the National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to address the needs of the victims of human trafficking through the following means:

a) by permitting victims of human trafficking to regularize their status in Canada through a grace period of at least 120 days during which these victims would not have to fear deportation and could obtain legal and medical assistance;

b) by permitting victims to receive temporary residence permits of at least two years length for those who would be endangered on return to their country or those willing to help with prosecutions of human traffickers, and through the opportunity to apply for permanent residence status and family reunification;

c) by ensuring that trafficked persons have access to physical safety, shelter, counseling services, legal services, interpretation services, basic medical assistance, job/education training, and the right to apply for work permits, similar to the opportunities offered to refugee claimants;

d) by providing funding to non-governmental organizations for trafficking-specific residential, community-based and/or outreach programs to provide services to victims of human trafficking and to raise awareness about the plight of these victims among law enforcement officers, health care providers, and the general public;

e) by, when necessary, making the services of federal witness protection available to the victims of human trafficking.

# APPENDIX 1

## *Highlights of PCWM Activities*

April 2005 – July 2007

- July/August 2005 **Celebrating Women Art Project**, raised funds for both Councils, as well as our public profile.
- We also worked with the local Council to hold **two very popular town halls**, one for a provincial by-election (Fort Whyte) in December, and the other an All Candidates Forum for Winnipeg South Centre, in January, during the recent Federal election.
- The membership for Provincial Council increased by 12 new Federates and our membership now stands at **31 Federates plus 55 individual members**. A successful Round Table, with a focus on the Federates was held in February 2006 & 2007, and identified the issues and priorities of our members.
- Our Semi Annual meeting held in November, 2005, had the theme of Gender Based Analysis – *“Gender Based Analysis: Counting Women In!”*. A complete report on the Semi Annual Meeting, and the Round Table is available from [pcwm@mts.net](mailto:pcwm@mts.net).
- The **Brief to the Government of Manitoba** was presented in September, and although the premier was not present, 15 members of the NDP Caucus attended, including several ministers. There were 24 members of PCWM supporting the presentation of the Brief. We also presented the same Brief to the Conservative Caucus, and a policy committee of the Liberal Party of Manitoba.
- In addition, **Briefs were presented to Manitoba Employment Standards Review, and a Brief in support of the Manitoba Dental Hygienist Act** (which was later proclaimed).
- There were 8 Board meetings, three general meetings, during the year, plus the Semi Annual Meeting, a Round Table for Federates, and the Annual Meeting (2005-2006)
- The September 29<sup>th</sup> General Meeting featured Irene Hamilton, B.A., L.L.B. (Manitoba’s Ombudsman) speaking on **Why A Government Watchdog: One Woman’s View**.
- The October 27<sup>th</sup> General Meeting featured a Panel, chaired by Marilyn McGonigal on the report by the **Manitoba Low Wage Community Inquiry**. Both Fall general meetings included a short presentation by Federates on their current work.
- The March General Meeting, provided an opportunity to discuss and vote on the NCWC resolutions.
- The theme for our AGM, held in Gimli, Manitoba, May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2006, was **“Water, Water Everywhere, But Not a Drop to Drink?”** This meeting offered our members and the public to learn more about the issues affecting the quality of water in this Canada’s 6<sup>th</sup> Great Lake.
- Two new special committees were formed. The **Poverty Committee** under the leadership of Marilyn McGonigal followed up on the report **“Paid to be Poor”** and the work of the Manitoba Low Wage Community Inquiry, as well as the many related issues affecting the poor in this province. Beverly Goodwin is chairing a committee on **Mental Health**, and the committee is working on the preparation of a report highlighting the challenges (and possible solutions) individuals, and families are facing around mental health. Our thanks to Elizabeth Fleming and the work of the **Rural/Urban Issues Committee** and their continuing commitment to supporting sustainable principles of development for Winnipeg, and Manitoba.
- PCWM continues to be an active member of the community by participating as a member of the **Just Income Coalition; the Gender Based Budget Coalition; the Rural Team (Joint Federal/Provincial); the Round Table Discussion and Resource Sharing on Violence Prevention - Programs and Services for Girls and Young Women; Leadership Winnipeg and the Voluntary and Non Profit Sector Organization of Manitoba**. Particular thanks to Leonore Saunders for her participation at the **Manitoba Water Caucus** (a working committee of the Manitoba Eco Network) – Leonore has represented PCWM well at this forum over the years. Bonni Book has joined Leonore this year at the Water Caucus meetings.
- During the year, (2005-2006) many committee, community and Federate meetings were held that the President attended, in addition to the 8 Board and 6 membership meetings. Some of these were:
- May 2005: *“Follow the Money”* Training; Life Members of CWW and PCWM luncheon; “Yes She Can” Award dinner hosted by Balmoral Hall School; Celebrating 20/20 Equality at the Women’s Enterprise Centre
- June: NCWC Annual Meeting in Montreal June 2 – June 5; Spoke to *Leadership Winnipeg* students; attended the *Keeping the Fires Burning* Dinner.

- August: Attended Equity Committee meeting sponsored by Manitoba Hydro in preparation to the construction of the new Manitoba Hydro building.
- October: Women's History Month event at the Leg.; Gender Budget Coalition meeting; LEAF Breakfast; Breakfast in the Round (Food Security); Manitoba Association of Women's Shelters AGM; Consultation regarding renewal of NAC (National Action Committee), coordinated by the Manitoba Women's Advisory Council; World Social Forum event at the Forks.
- November: Poverty Reduction in Manitoba planning meeting; CCPA Release "*State of the Inner City Report*"; Birthing Centre consultation; Poverty Committee meeting.
- December: Town Hall provincial by-election jointly sponsored by CWW/PCWM; Gender Budget Coalition; Waverley West consultation
- January: Winnipeg South Centre All Candidates Forum, jointly sponsored by CWW/PCWM; CWW General Meeting; Joint Resolutions Committee; meeting with Lenore Besheid (honourary patroness PCWM); Presented to Legislative committee regarding self regulation of Manitoba Dental Hygienists; opening of transition centre at MORN; Women's Committee from the Rural Team; 2 days of Gender Based Analysis training; meeting coordinated by Elizabeth Fry regarding the closure of Headingley Jail; Round Table coordinated by Manitoba Women's Advisory Council on Violence Prevention: Programs and Services for Girls and Young Women
- February: Birthing Centre meeting; CWW General Meeting; Launch of Alternative Budget, with CCPA and UNPAC; Mental Health Committee Meeting
- March: Provincial Budget Lock-up; International Women's Day Event at the Leg – PCWM had a display; Meeting with Manitoba Association of Women's Shelters; Spoke at Red River College International Women's Day event;
- April: Attended the series of "Women's Lives" lectures at the University Women's Club of Winnipeg; Poverty Committee; CWW Annual Meeting; Joint CWW/PCWM Archives Committee; Town Hall on Vision for Winnipeg; Spoke on a panel "Does Manitoba Need a Child's Bill of Rights?"; Attended Riel Community Committee Meeting – topic Waverley West; Meeting with YMCA-YWCA regarding possible funding support for PCWM/CWW Archives; Breakfast sponsored by Laurel Centre with Craig Kielburger; Board meeting -Voluntary and Non Profit Sector Organizations of Manitoba.
- June 2, 3, and 4<sup>th</sup>, 2006, attended the **NCWC Annual Meeting**, held in Ottawa, where many of the Resolutions in this Brief were debated and voted on.
- In June too, the President was invited and attended a consultation sponsored by the Prairie Centre for Women's Health on **Housing Needs of Immigrant Women**.
- PCWM was represented at the **Community Climate Change Consultations** held June 27<sup>th</sup>, 2006.
- PCWM and CWW are actively pursuing the organizing of the Councils' archives. Both Councils have long time members, who have considerable materials covering the history of women in this province. To date, we have received financial support from the Winnipeg Foundation, and the YM-YWCA to hire an archivist. We are also exploring the possibility to conducting an oral history project with some of our long time members. The project is "**The Babs Friesen Councils of Women Archival Project**".
- PCWM is a co-sponsor for 2 panel presentations during **Right To Know Week**, September 22<sup>nd</sup> and September 28<sup>th</sup>.
- Our first program, for 2006-2007, September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2006, featured Debra Parkes, Chair of the Board for Elizabeth Fry, speaking on the proposed changes to the Portage Jail for Women.
- Our October meeting featured a presentation by Rita Emerson on the **Sisters in Spirit** campaign.
- Our semi annual meeting, November 25<sup>th</sup>, 2006 was on the topic of **human trafficking** (see 3.8 in the above Brief). This was an excellent meeting, well attended, with a panel presentation. **Two Resolutions** were approved and are included in the Brief.
- Attended the CCPA release of the "Inner-City" Voices: Community-Based Solutions report, on the 2006 State of the Inner City Report, at Thunderbird House.
- During the civic elections, PCWM jointly sponsored a public mayoralty forum that was well attended, although not by the incumbent.
- December 2<sup>nd</sup>, a meeting of the Provincial Council Ways and Means Committee took place which developed an action plan to support **PCWM financial sustainability**.
- December 6<sup>th</sup>, attended the Sunrise Memorial Service, sponsored by Minister for the Status of Women, Hon. Nancy Allan.
- December 8<sup>th</sup>, attended a meeting of the **Birthing Centre** Support Committee, coordinated by Women's Health Clinic.
- December 14<sup>th</sup>, participated in the **Campaign 2000** (Children and Poverty) consultation, held in Winnipeg.

- December 19<sup>th</sup>, attended a meeting of individuals and representatives of organizations concerned about the **portrayal of women in the media**.
- December 20<sup>th</sup>, attended a reception at the Aboriginal Leadership Institute.
- December 20<sup>th</sup>, attended a Round Table with Hon. Stephen Dion, hosted by Hon. Anita Neville.
- January 10<sup>th</sup>, PCWM and CWW met with **Joy Smith, MP** regarding a number of issues of concern to Council. A follow up letter was sent to Ms. Smith, outlining the points we raised.
- January 19<sup>th</sup>, assisted Jackie Steele, spokesperson for **NAWL** (National Association of Women and the Law), who sponsored a “Campus Cocktails” event at the University of Winnipeg. This was a great success in bringing a diverse group of women together to talk about the cutbacks federally affecting women and equality seeking groups.
- January 25<sup>th</sup> was a very special meeting of PCWM, with the release of the **Discussion Paper on Mental Health – The Way We See It**. Over 50 people attended and participated in small working groups. The Working Committee of PCWM on Mental Health is continuing to gather stories, and will be further analyzing and bringing forward recommendations on the delivery of mental health services.
- February 23<sup>rd</sup> was the second **Round Table**, with a focus on hearing from our 31 Federate Members on their issues and priorities.
- February and March attended a number of the classes offered by the University Women’s Club on ethical dilemmas, called “Hard Choices”.
- March 23<sup>rd</sup>, participated in the evaluation of **Leadership Winnipeg**.
- For 2006-2007, there were 8 Board meetings, 2 Executive Committee meetings, and 4 General Meetings, plus the Semi Annual meeting, the Round Table, and the Annual Meeting.
- April 25<sup>th</sup>, the Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba purchased a table for the Laurel Centre Breakfast to hear Margaret Trudeau speaking on Mental Health. Bev Goodwin, chair of the PCWM working committee on mental health was able to give Ms. Trudeau a copy of the discussion paper on Mental Health – *The Way We See It*.
- May 17<sup>th</sup> was the date of the PCWM 58<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting, held at St. Andrews College, University of Manitoba. The meeting featured a presentation by Mayor Tammy Axelsson of Gimli, “The New Lady on the Lake”, plus Her Honour Lenore Bersheid giving us an update on the work she and His Honour have been doing to support children with Autism Spectrum and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum disorders. PCWM also gave long time member Babs Friesen a Life Membership to Provincial Council at the Annual Meeting. The **Board for 2007 – 2008** was elected:

President: Maxine Balbon

Past President: Mary Scott

Vice President: Marilyn McGonigal

Treasurer: Major Karen Hoeft

Secretary: Peggy Barker

Membership: Barb Kendel

Constitution: Marilyn McGonigal

Archives: Honourary Chairs: Donna Mae Yeo &

Babs Friesen      Committee: Mary Scott &

Joan Butcher

Resolutions: Muriel Smith

Communications: Karen Sharma

Members -at-large: Helen Garrity

Barbara Toews

Signe Jewett

Council of Women of Winnipeg: Pat Powell

The following Committee Chairs were also elected:

Mental Health: Bev Goodwin and June Menzies

Fund Raising: Arlene Draffin Jones and Shirley Walker

Urban/Rural: Elizabeth Fleming

Poverty and Social Justice: Marilyn McGonigal

- PCWM held the first Celebrating Women Gala at Assiniboine Park Conservatory on July 11<sup>th</sup>, 2007, honouring 6 individual and 2 federate members of PCWM.

# Papers Presented to the NDP Caucus September 24<sup>th</sup>, 2007

## Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba, Inc.

630 Westminster Avenue Winnipeg MB R3C 3S1

Tel: (204) 992-2751 Fax: (204) 783-3882 E-mail [pcwm@mts.net](mailto:pcwm@mts.net)

### Comments regarding Midwifery

Re **Midwifery**-- the PCWM have long supported midwifery and women and family centred maternity. We were delighted to see the government's announcement during the election to expand midwifery and fund a birth centre through the Women's Health Clinic.

PCWM has a member on the planning committee and is aware that initial discussions have occurred with the WRHA. It is critical that the original vision for the birth centre be maintained. This innovative program is a model for other RHAs too.

Manitoba, like other provinces, has a looming maternity care provider shortage and increasing rates of intervention, centralization of births in two tertiary facilities and poorer outcomes compared to other provinces [this is linked to socio economic status]. We urgently need:

- midwifery education and recruitment strategy. The program in the north is wonderful but we need something in the south--- it needs to be multi phased—buy some seats in Ontario and other schools, offer an upgrading/bridging program for nurses, foreign trained midwives etc and a direct entry program-- with a strong apprenticeship component. The WHC birth centre proposal included a capacity for this.
- a provincially managed maternity care program--- where low risk women have access within their communities to midwifery, family physicians and give birth. We appreciate that a PROVINCIAL TASK FORCE TO REVIEW MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH-CARE SERVICES IN MANITOBA has been announced, but we need action now-- women's groups need to have more of a voice in this. We need the government to ensure that they are more actively engaged. PCWM would be happy to partner with the province in ensuring this occurs. The announcement of a new Women's Hospital is good news for women but the WRHA needs direction on engaging the women's community in its design, and services etc.

September 24, 2007

(Provided by WHC, and PWHCE)

Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba

By: Beverley A. Goodwin, Co-Chair

Ad-Hoc Committee on Mental Health

September 24, 2007

## **Mental Health Presentation to the NDP Caucus**

There are many factors contributing to mental illness. And today within the Provincial Council of Women Brief are many resolutions addressing these issues; those involving poverty, social and economic inequity in education and employment and the victimization of women, to name but a few.

In mental health, victimization of the users and family members by a 'flawed' system further contributes to the breakdown, not only of families, but of the larger communities within Canada.

We urgently need to address the systemic problems. Problems not unlike those recently revealed in the Winnipeg Free Press on the Child & Family Services within this province.

The Council of Women realize this as a 'huge' challenge however, we encourage this Government to embrace reform, including input from all vested interests, and most particularly from family members of the mentally ill.

To begin, we must enhance the lives of the mentally ill by immediately improving their impoverished standard of living in income and housing. We must not allow the continued 'systemic' neglect of our most vulnerable citizens to continue.

The Federal Government announcement of the establishment of the Mental Health Commission of Canada, Chaired by Michael Kirby, has been well received and we believe that this Government needs to commit to and support the urgency of reform.

Thank-you.

## Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba, Inc.

630 Westminster Avenue Winnipeg MB R3C 3S1

Tel: (204) 992-2751 Fax: (204) 783-3882 E-mail [pcwm@mts.net](mailto:pcwm@mts.net)

### Poverty, Minimum Wage and Part time Employment

PCWM passed its first resolution on Poverty and the Minimum Wage eight years ago, advocating raising the minimum wage *“as quickly as possible to the level that covers the cost to an employee of purchasing the necessities of life and health”*. In 2003 we supported increases every 6 months to raise it to a living wage in a reasonable but short period. The policy adopted by government from 2000 to 2007 was instead a series of annual minimal increases that did nothing to change the basic rate relative to the annual cost of living increases. The current minimum wage of \$8.00 is still \$3.00 below the poverty line or cost of basic necessities.

This situation has created a class known as the “working poor”. David Northcott of Winnipeg Harvest informs us that there are more children from this group using the food bank than from families on assistance. Doesn't that tell us something important? *“Summoned to Stewardship”*, the latest publication from Campaign 2000 cites two other provinces, Quebec and Newfoundland & Labrador that have reduced their child poverty rates by 40% and Manitoba must too. A strategy to follow is laid out in this Report - available on line at [http://www.campaign2000.ca/res/dispapers/summoned\\_to\\_stewardship..pdf](http://www.campaign2000.ca/res/dispapers/summoned_to_stewardship..pdf)

PCWM continues to strongly advocate phasing in a minimum wage rate in 6-month intervals that covers “basic needs” and provides a living wage. How is the Government of Manitoba going to close the gap and enable all workers to stand with dignity, supporting themselves and their families and sharing in Manitoba's prosperity?

It is an awful black eye that our province has the second worst record of children living in poverty (51,000 in 2005) behind only B.C. Behind these children are poor parents. How can we expect them to look after their families when all their energy is focussed on having enough to eat, clothes to wear and a safe home? Why are we surprised by gang activity, the drug trade, prostitution and gambling? What other choices do they have? We are not living up to our UN commitments or our national goals.

Raising the minimum wage will not have a seriously negative impact on small businesses or the hospitality industry if it is increased gradually with a minimum of 3 months notice. Employers must realize that they are not entitled to a profit unless their workers are fairly paid and the Government should understand that it is subsidizing businesses at the taxpayers expense for welfare services as long as this situation persists.

PCWM has long advocated that part-time and casual workers should receive pro-rated pay and benefits and employers should not get away with limiting hours of work to avoid paying any benefits. The breach of our duty to defend part-time workers has also contributed to this dire situation for women and children. Surely the number of these children using the Food Bank should be less than those on assistance, not more.

## PCWM POLICIES

### PCWM Policy

#### 99-01 Minimum Wage

**RESOLVED** that the Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba urge the Government of Manitoba:

- to recognize the minimum wage as a tool to fight poverty and
- to raise the minimum wage as quickly as possible to the level that covers “the cost to an employee of purchasing the necessities of life and health” and
- to legislate regular review and adjustment that keeps the minimum wage in line with the cost of living and
- to amend the legislation so that the Minimum Wage Board membership is composed of community representatives and persons qualified to address the legislative intent of Section 28(5) of the Employment Standards Act (1987).

### PCWM Policy

#### 2003 Minimum Wage, And The Employment Standards Code

**Resolved** That the Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba urge the Government of Manitoba to:

- a. Recognize the principles of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 23 (3);
- b. Implement one "just and favourable" minimum wage for every worker in Manitoba regardless of age, sex, marital or family status/living arrangements;
- c. Raise the minimum wage by increments at six month intervals until it reaches the "living wage" level and then tie future regular annual increases to an appropriate standard such as the CPI or the average industrial wage;
- d. Amend *The Employment Standards Code* to:
  - 1) restore the directive that the Minimum Wage Board is obliged to consider the costs of purchasing the necessities of life and health when recommending what is "just and favourable remuneration" according to the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
  - 2) ensure the participation of neutral representatives of the community who are qualified to address the amended intent of the Code, in consultation with workers and employers, on any future Minimum Wage Board.

**Quote from Winnipeg Harvest website:** [www.winnipegharvest.org](http://www.winnipegharvest.org)

**People working full time earning minimum wage** make just over \$12,000 annually. Welfare rates are similar. It costs over \$7,000 annually to rent a two bedroom apartment. It takes much creativity, and sacrifice, to pay for everything else on just \$5,000 annually: food, transportation, clothing, heating, phone, childcare, medications and dental care. Budgeting is not the problem. **Not enough money to make ends meet is the problem, leading many to the food bank.**

- 47% of people receiving emergency food from Winnipeg Harvest are children 1
- 1,600 infants require emergency baby formula from Winnipeg Harvest each month
- 29 Winnipeg daycares, 48 community centres and 27 schools receive meal and snack food from Winnipeg Harvest to service children that might otherwise go hungry.

#### Recommendations from *Summoned to Stewardship*

- **Raise and index minimum wages to a poverty reduction standard of \$10 an hour (2007 dollars)**
- **Invest provincial revenue in affordable housing initiatives**
- **Invest provincial revenue in extended drug and dental coverage**
- **Invest provincial revenue in early learning and child care**