

Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba, Inc.

204-825 Sherbrook St., Winnipeg, MB., R3A 1M5

Tel: (204) 992-2751 Fax : 204 975-3027 E-mail pcwm@mts.net

The Honourable Theresa Oswald,
Minister of Health,
302 Legislative Building
450 Broadway
Winnipeg, MB R3C 0V8

May 17, 2010

Dear Ms. Oswald,

The Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba is writing to urge the Government to support services for those suffering disordered eating, eating disorders and binge eating disorders. The recent article in the Winnipeg Free Press highlighted the fact that the outreach program currently offered by the Women's Health Clinic has not been advised about continuing funding. This program has proven to be effective, and has a waiting list.

There is considerable data now on the prevalence of this illness. For example, over the past two decades, eating disorders have grown to epidemic proportions in Canadian society. Ontario Health supplement data, 1995, indicates a prevalence of 0.6% of females ages 14-64 having full syndrome anorexia and 1.4% partial syndrome. Dr. Garfinkel, 1995, indicates a mortality rate of 5% to 17% and chronic morbidity of 25%. The prevalence data would indicate that 7386 Manitoba women aged 14 to 64 suffer with anorexia. Using the Ontario prevalence data it is estimated that another 4111 Manitoba women of these ages suffer from bulimia. (*Data source – Winnipeg Regional Health Authority – May 27, 1999)

We note the government's policy of a coordinated, community approach to treatment, prevention, education and awareness. Our policy supports this. The hospital approach which was first established in Manitoba, was a priority in the early days when society was beginning to appreciate the seriousness of the disease. Now we must look to the early intervention side and help girls, (and increasingly boys) and families before the eating disorder gets a destructive hold on them. The community approach is effective to build and add to the existing services.

It was back in 1987 that Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba took action on this issue with the following policy:

ANOREXIA NERVOSA AND BULIMIA

1987 urged the Government of Manitoba through its Women's Health Directorate:

- 1) to set up an educational and preventative program for the problems of anorexia nervosa and bulimia directed to medical and helping professions and the general public; and*
- 2) to increase outpatient services for anorexia nervosa and bulimia*

You will see, even then, we saw education and prevention as an important strategy.

We also urge you to consider the rural areas of Manitoba and what might be set up to meet the needs of rural families We need to help people in the early stages instead of when they are critically ill, and needing costly hospital care.

Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba has a working committee on Mental Health, which has been very active in bringing forward public discussion on mental health, the impact on families, and individuals and the health care system. Public education is a role that Provincial Council of Women can play, as well as bringing forward recommendations for action through our resolution process.

Honourary Patroness, Her Honour Anita K. Lee
In Federation with the National Council of Women of Canada www.ncwc.ca
<http://www.pcwmanitoba.ca>

We look forward to hearing an announcement regarding funding for the Women's Health Clinic Eating Disorders Program.

Yours sincerely,

Marilyn McGonigal, President
C.C. Premier Greg Sellinger

Honourary Patroness, Her Honour Anita K. Lee
In Federation with the National Council of Women of Canada www.ncwc.ca
<http://www.pcwmanitoba.ca>