



BRIEF

**For Presentation To
The Government of Manitoba**

**The Honourable Greg Selinger
Premier
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By

The Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba, Inc.

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PREAMBLE

The Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba (PCWM) is pleased to present its 2011 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 2007.

PCWM strives to empower women to improve the quality of life for themselves, their families and society. It is a volunteer organization consisting of a federation of organizations and individual members whose purpose is to improve social conditions by influencing political decision-making and public attitudes. Our common purpose draws support from people from all political parties, and members from a variety of social, economic, religious and ethnic backgrounds. No government funding is received nor is funding received from partisan groups.

PCWM works by a resolution process – all resolutions are debated and voted on by the representative of a federate organization and then become policy. The policies you see in this Brief have been developed through such a process, and focus on issues that are provincial in scope although they may also have national significance. The brief includes the policies approved by PCWM since the last submission in 2007, as well as National Council of Women of Canada (NCWC) policies that may have provincial implications.

PCWM is one of the councils that exist in Manitoba and Canada at the local, provincial, national and international levels (please see Appendix for details).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

We wish to raise concerns today about provincial policy and action (or lack of) in a number of areas. Specifically, our Brief contains information on policies developed and approved by PCWM federates between 2008 and 2011. They focus on issues related to lobbyists, environmental health, housing, accessibility, electronic health records, bilingual family services, and adult literacy.

The Brief consists of 3 sections: *Commendations and Reiterations*, *Recent and Current Concerns*, and an *Appendix*.

Commendations and Reiterations address actions taken or not taken on previous PCWM policies. Major points that will be repeated here focus on critical issues for women and children in relieving the pressures of poverty.

Recent and Current Concerns are new policies being presented to Government:

- a. Plastic Bags
- b. Lobbyist Registration Legislation and Code of Conduct for Lobbyists in Manitoba and Winnipeg
- c. Endocrine-Disrupting Chemicals
- d. Sustainable Family Resource Centres in Subsidized Housing Communities
- e. Comprehensive Housing Strategy for Manitobans
- f. Accessibility Rights Legislation for Manitobans
- g. Right to Access of Complete Personal Electronic Health Record
- h. Bilingual Services for Survivors of Domestic Violence
- i. Adult Literacy Programming for Low-Income Mothers and Single Parents

We believe our policies can provide Government with background information and direction on emerging and ongoing issues that are of significant concern to PCWM's federates.

The *Appendix* contains a background section which provides additional information and, in some cases, research references that were used to support the specific policies. It also lists the federate members of various Councils of Women, and gives an overview of the activities of the Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba in the last 2 years.

Beyond presenting information on specific concerns, PCWM strongly agrees with:

1. 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.

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.

COMMENDATIONS AND REITERATIONS

Women in Non-Traditional Trades¹

It is well known that women are underrepresented in the non-traditional trades. As of March 2010, women represented only 2.7% of apprentices in the non-traditional trades in Manitoba. According to the Construction Sector Council, only 4% of those employed in the construction trades in Canada are women. In other words, despite the high demand for skilled trades people and the salary prospects in these careers, women remain a largely untapped labour pool.

Nonetheless, Manitoba has made some significant strides in supporting women in non-traditional trades. There has been increased promotion of and subsequent attendance at events and programs focused on young women. Examples include Manitoba Status of Women – *Training for Tomorrow Educational Awards* (for women entering two-year diploma programs in the areas of math, science and technology at any one of Manitoba's four community colleges), *Skills Canada Manitoba – Young Women's Conferences* (offered annually in rural and urban centres for young women in grades 8-12), *Red River College's "Girls Exploring Trades and Technology (GETT)" camps* (week-long summer camps for Manitoba girls in grades 7 and 8), *Women In Science and Engineering (WISE) University of Manitoba – Kid-Netic Energy Girls* (which offers weekly three hour club meetings where girls explore different areas of science and engineering), or *Manitoba Department of Competitiveness, Training and Trade – Trade Up To Your Future* (aimed at unemployed and underemployed women, women who are low skilled or low income, and women who are about to lose their job). The *Manitoba Status of Women – Power Up* introductory computer course for women also promotes the importance of technology for women in today's society/marketplace.

The government is further commended for including more women in trades advertising materials, and for focusing on greater gender equity in materials provided to school and employment counselors, addressing some of the socialization factors that condition girls not to think about the trades as viable career options.

Given the higher pay rates in the apprenticeable trades, the stark salary discrepancies between women and men across the country, and the direct link between women's lower education, lower pay rates, and the destructive cycles of generational poverty, more work needs to be done, however. The challenges in recruiting, training and long-term retention for women in the skilled trades must still be addressed: unwelcoming workplaces, discrimination during apprenticeship, lack of childcare, inadequate facilities on work sites, and barriers to making formal complaints of harassment or discrimination.

¹ Taken from a report prepared by the Manitoba Status of Women in preparation for the 55th meeting of the Commission on the Status of Women.

Plastic Bags

Since the Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba passed its *Packaging and Printed Paper Stewardship Regulation* in December 2008, a regulation that shifts the responsibility and cost of collecting and recycling these materials to the producers of the products. We would like to commend the government for setting a target for plastic bags as a part of this regulation. The regulation calls for the reduction of plastic bags going into the landfill by 50% within five years of the regulation coming into effect. The method of achieving that target has been left up to the new agency, Multi-Material Stewardship Manitoba (MMSM), which will be responsible for recycling a wide range of products. The focus of MMSM, thus far, seems to be on increasing the number of used bags that are collected back at supermarkets. Currently they account for only 10% of the bags issued. The collected material is recycled into shrink-wrap and other products. The successful 2010 Bag Up Manitoba -- Plastic Bag Round-Up Challenge is an example of a strategy used to gather bags for re-use.

While recycling is an admirable goal, it comes after reduction and re-use in the hierarchy of the environmental “three Rs”. A recent waste audit has shown the Manitobans do re-use plastic bags. Nearly half of the bags going into the landfill are used as containers for garbage. We believe that focus should be on the reduction of the other half through incentives for consumers to use reusable bags. While many supermarkets charge a small fee for a bag on a voluntary basis, our resolution calling for a more significant and mandatory charge could be very relevant if MMSM does not meet the target. While we commend the province for the action taken to date, more is required. We urge the province to monitor the new agency and to take prompt action if the target is not reached.

Birth Centre and Midwifery

The Province of Manitoba is sincerely and whole-heartedly congratulated on the opening of its free-standing community birth centre, which will expand birthing options for Manitoba women. The collaboration with the College of Midwives of Manitoba creates a new paradigm that moves birthing back into the community, and represents a significant step forward in providing health care and education to mothers and babies through its programs and services. Midwives can be the most appropriate care provider for low-risk pregnancies. Still, in RHAs where services are available, 50% of women are turned away. Further, women in rural areas often have no access to midwives at all, even though it is a funded service in other parts of the province.

Literacy Funding

In the past number of years, funding for adult literacy has increased significantly, and work on a provincial strategy to align literacy and Adult Learning Centres programming has been initiated. The work done by both literacy practitioners and adult learning

centre staff is critical to the social and economic well-being of the province, and a more effective adult education system supports that work. However, the current over-focus on employment-related literacy and adult education excludes the most marginalized populations, most of whom are women and mothers, and minimizes the breadth and depth of the work that needs to be done to create real access to educational programming for populations that are most at risk of being permanently “left behind”. We encourage the Province to revision Family Literacy to tackle this most complex intersection of gender, poverty, education, and positive family and social engagement.

Housing

Despite some efforts to address housing shortages in Winnipeg, not enough is being done to make affordable housing available to marginalized and at-risk Manitobans. In particular, women and single mothers require far greater support and services, so that they can raise children and care for elders in a healthier and safer environment. While women are at great risk of ill health, poverty and abuse in connection to a lack of safe, affordable housing, immigrant and Aboriginal women, women with mental health concerns of disabilities, and women living in rural and remote areas, are especially vulnerable.

We strongly urge the government to use this new term in office to increase the housing options available to people living on low to moderate incomes, and to work with community development partners to improve living conditions in those housing communities that do exist.

Poverty and Well-Being

Research from around the world shows that women bear a disproportionate amount of the burden when it comes to living in poverty, despite the fact that women - especially women living on low to moderate incomes - are still the main providers of food, eldercare and childcare. Sometimes the poverty is related to access to education, whereas at other times it is connected to poor access to safe living conditions or a lack of stable, well-paid employment with the options of public transportation, childcare supports, and health or other benefits.

The Manitoba Government has a wide variety of excellent programs in place, but PCWM urges the government to review any policies and programs related to the alleviation of poverty through a gender lens to ensure that substantive equality can be achieved when it comes to adult education and employment, and access to programs and services. In the next four years, the Government has an opportunity to support and pilot some innovative projects, and to put in place progressive programs and policies that begin to improve conditions for impoverished Manitobans.

The Canadian Index of Well-Being has provided a useful rubric for analyzing contributing factors to well-being, and can help to guide the Province's work and decision-making.

Gaming

Has the Manitoba Government become addicted to Gaming Revenues? Since 1996, PCWM has urged the Manitoba Government to reduce the level of gambling in Manitoba and not to let its financial dependence on gambling revenues overtake its duty not to encourage increased gambling to increase government revenues. We believe the Gaming Commission should be empowered to promote the values and well-being of citizens and communities over corporate imperatives in government-operated gaming enterprises.

The Winnipeg Free Press on November 4, 2011, reported the following: "The Crown corporation is coming off a roll, according to its recently released 2010-11 annual report, earning a booming \$43.5 million more in overall revenue than in the year before, and it wants that profitable trend to continue, MLC spokeswoman Susan Olynik said Thursday."

PCWM recognizes the need to regulate gaming and that the Government monopoly is preferred to de-criminalization and deregulation of this harm-based activity for addicted and potentially addicted participants. PCWM therefore reiterates its concerns and urges the Government to:

- a) refrain from introducing measures that encourage increased gambling in order to meet increased revenue goals;
- b) prohibit promotional 'lifestyle' advertising by the MLC and the Western Canada Lotteries Commission;
- c) continue to limit the number and appeal of VLTs;
- d) find other revenues to replace gaming revenues;
- e) monitor and mitigate the negative social and economic outcomes of the publicly owned gaming industry the better to serve citizens and communities that suffer from the effects of gambling addiction, and to
- f) apply these principles to other gambling activities such as online betting on single sports events that are or may be under consideration for provincially regulated gaming.

Early Learning and Child Care

The Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba believes in the value of Early Learning and Child Care. PCWM recommends the government of Manitoba continue a plan of enhancements to the existing system, and supports the goals of a fully accessible, non-profit system of comprehensive, flexible and high quality early learning and child care, worthy wages and working conditions, funded jointly by the federal and provincial governments and parents.

The Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba supports our federate member, Manitoba Child Care Association of Manitoba in making the following recommendations for consideration:

- a) That the government of Manitoba lobby the Government of Canada for federal funding, and leadership in developing a high quality, not for profit, accessible, inclusive early learning and child care system;
- b) That the Government of Manitoba work faster, to address the issue of multi-year wait lists for parents who choose licensed early learning and child care;
- c) That the Government of Manitoba ensure affordability for parents by implementing annual indexing of subsidy levels and continue to make subsidy available to eligible families;
- d) That the Government of Manitoba address compensation and retention issues permanently by funding a provincial salary scale in 2012 that is at current market competitive rates, and applies to child care employees inclusive of recognition of years of service and applies to all positions; and
- e) That the Government of Manitoba funding to licensed early learning and child care facilities should increase according to the annual increases in operating costs.

RECENT CONCERNS

2007.3 PLASTIC BAGS

Whereas, disposable plastic bags, blowing in the wind, litter our streets, especially around landfill sites and pose a danger to wildlife on land and in water, and

Whereas, plastic bags do not break down easily in landfill sites and can interfere with the decomposition of other materials, and

Whereas, some re-use is possible, but plastic grocery bags are difficult or impossible to recycle in blue box programs, and

Whereas, even compostable bags contribute to litter and do not decompose easily in home composters; therefore be it

Resolved, that the Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba adopt as policy that all retail outlets that provide customers with plastic shopping bags, should have low cost reusable bags available at the check out and that this alternative be mentioned to all customers who have not brought their own bags or need additional bags, and be it further

Resolved, that the Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba adopt as policy that all plastic bags designed for one time use be compostable, and be it further

Resolved, that the Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba adopt as policy that a levy should be placed on plastic shopping bags that will be adjusted from time to time so that it is no less than a fifth of the value of a low cost permanent bag, and be it further

Resolved, that the Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba adopt as policy that funds collected from the levy should be used for waste reduction activities, and be it further

Resolved, that the Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba ask the provincial government of Manitoba to enact legislation aimed at significantly reducing the use of plastic shopping bags through the use of economic incentives, and be it further

Resolved, that the Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba ask the provincial government of Manitoba to enact legislation requiring all retail outlets that provide customers with plastic shopping bags to have low cost reusable bags available at the check out and that this alternative be mentioned to all customers who have not brought their own bags or require additional ones, and be it further

Resolved, that the Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba pass legislation requiring retailers to provide only compostable plastic bags, and be it further

Resolved, that the Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba ask the provincial government of Manitoba to enact legislation placing a levy on plastic shopping bags that will be adjusted from time to time so that it is no less than a fifth of the value of a low cost permanent bag, and be it further

Resolved, that the Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba ask the provincial government of Manitoba to use funds collected from this levy for waste reduction activities.

2008. LOBBYISTS REGISTRATION LEGISLATION AND CODE OF CONDUCT FOR LOBBYISTS IN MANITOBA AND WINNIPEG

Whereas, open and unfettered access to government is a vital aspect of democracy;

Whereas, lobbying public office holders is a legitimate activity;

Whereas, public office holders and the public should be able to know who is attempting to influence government;

Whereas, public disclosure of the identities, causes and conduct of lobbyists is important to the integrity of government decision-making;

Whereas, recent high profile incidents of secret lobbying that abused the right of access to governments across the country have been reported;

Whereas, Manitoba has enacted conflict of interest legislation that applies to elected officials in Manitoba and Winnipeg;

Whereas, there is no legislation that applies to lobbyists in Manitoba;

Whereas, the Governments of Canada; six provinces (Quebec, Ontario, British Columbia, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia and Alberta); and the City of Toronto have enacted Lobbyists Registration Legislation; and

Whereas, the Governments of Canada, Quebec and Newfoundland and Labrador have each included a Code of Conduct for Lobbyists under their legislation; therefore be it

Resolved, that the Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba adopt as policy the enactment of a Manitoba Lobbyists Registration Act including a Code of Conduct for Lobbyists; and further be it

Resolved, that the Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba urge the Government of Manitoba to enact a Manitoba Lobbyists Registration Act including a Code of Conduct for Lobbyists; and further be it

Resolved, that the Council of Women of Winnipeg adopt as policy the enactment by the City of Winnipeg Lobbyists Registration legislation including a Code of Conduct for Lobbyists; and further be it

Resolved, that the Council of Women of Winnipeg urge the City of Winnipeg to enact Winnipeg Lobbyists Registration legislation including a Code of Conduct for Lobbyists.

***Note:** Discussion on the above policy centered on the definition of the recommended definition should be that PCWM/CWW supports. An update is required for next year.*

2009.1 ENDOCRINE-DISRUPTING CHEMICALS

Whereas, endocrine disrupting chemicals (EDCs) are known to have adverse effects on aquatic life, interfere with the reproductive system, increase the incidence of some cancers and weaken immune systems, and

Whereas, there are several known or suspected EDCs present in waste water discharge, and

Whereas, the province of Manitoba currently does not test for the presence of these chemicals downstream of Winnipeg's waste treatment plants, and

Whereas, the presence of even low level EDCs in Lake Winnipeg could wipe out species and destroy the fishery, therefore be it

Resolved, that Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba (PCWM) ask the Province of Manitoba, as a first step to protecting aquatic life in Lake Winnipeg,

- to test for estrogens, particularly 17-beta-estradiol, 17-alpha-estradiol, estrone, ethinylestradiol, and estriol in the Red River between Winnipeg and Selkirk at least three times in the ice free season
- to consult with scientists with special knowledge of EDCs as to which tests should have priority and as to which labs might conduct them
- to add, as resources allow, tests for other suspected EDCs in the effluent of the waste treatment plants.

CURRENT CONCERNS

2011.1 ADEQUATE FUNDING FOR SUSTAINABLE FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRES IN SUBSIDIZED HOUSING COMMUNITIES

Whereas, subsidized housing communities have become ghettos of largely single-parent, female-headed families living in poverty, many of whom have been traumatized by domestic abuse, residential school systems or the atrocities of war; and

Whereas, most of the women living in these communities have low literacy levels, low education levels and few marketable skills; and

Whereas, women and their children living in these communities are the most disenfranchised, vulnerable citizens of Manitoba; and

Whereas, without a “hand up” these women and their children are destined to continue to live in poverty with the consequent factors for children and youth, of poor nutrition, poor health (physical/mental), poor educational outcomes and greater risk of early pregnancy, gang involvement, mental health issues, addictions; and

Whereas, in housing communities situated in suburban neighbourhoods, the residents are often faced with hostility and discrimination by neighbours and have few available social service supports; therefore be it

Resolved, that the Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba adopts as policy that

a) Families in subsidized housing consisting primarily of women and children living impoverished lives without hope for a better life, need accessible, coordinated resources and programs which contribute to individual empowerment, strengthening of families and the development of safe, well connected supportive communities thereby helping women acquire hope, experience, skills and opportunities for a better life for themselves and their children, and

b) Government policy and funding allocations designed to provide an appropriate strategy and resources to empower women's lives, especially women living in poverty in subsidized housing communities, must include adequate secure long term core funding for family resource centres to ensure successful results, and

c) Programs and services with adequate long term core funding should be established in subsidized housing communities in suburban neighbourhoods and other Manitoba subsidized housing communities with similar characteristics to those receiving these services in Winnipeg "inner-city" locations; and be it further

Resolved, that the Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba urge the Government of Manitoba to

a) Proceed urgently to address the significant need for accessible, coordinated resources and programs which contribute to individual empowerment, strengthening of families and the development of safe, well connected, supportive communities thereby helping women acquire hope, experience, skills and opportunities for a better life for themselves and their children, and

b) Proceed urgently to provide adequate secure long term core funding to sustain family resource centres in subsidized housing communities that provide appropriate accessible, coordinated services and programs to successfully address the needs of women and children living in poverty in subsidized housing, and

c) Expand the boundaries of government-funded initiatives beyond the "inner-city" to include subsidized housing communities in suburban neighbourhoods and other Manitoba communities with similar characteristics to those of the "inner-city".

2011.2: A COMPREHENSIVE HOUSING STRATEGY FOR MANITOBANS

Whereas, safe housing and neighbourhoods are a determinant of health; and

Whereas, there is a critical shortage of public housing and of affordable housing in Manitoba; and

Whereas, there is a critical shortage of rental apartments due to many units/buildings being converted into condominiums; and

Whereas, Manitoba has a high levels of poverty - the lower quintiles of household incomes having not kept up with the cost of living over the past decade; and

Whereas, current housing projects initiated through tri-partite funding agreements are laudable, but it will take years before enough housing stock is available to meet the need for safe affordable housing in this province; and

Whereas, many females heads of households cannot afford nor find decent housing for themselves and their families; and

Whereas, the Province of Manitoba has a robust immigration policy having received in 2010 a record of 15,800 new residents and its declared goal is to accept 20,000

newcomers to the province every year by the year 2015, putting further stress on limited housing; and

Whereas, Manitoba Shelter Benefit is a valuable program which subsidizes low-income families with children under eighteen, people living with disabilities and elderly renters; and

Whereas, individuals/families in receipt of Employment and Income Assistance have not had any significant increases in housing allowance for many years; therefore be it

Resolved, that the Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba adopt as policy support for a robust Manitoba Shelter Benefit Program and Housing Strategy which is examined under a gender-based, diversity-based and accessibility analysis; and be it further

Resolved, that the Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba urge the Province of Manitoba to expand the Manitoba Shelter Benefit Program by extending it to single individuals and to all households who need shelter subsidies due to their low income, regardless of their source of income, so that they can access private housing stock that meets provincial standards, until there will be enough public housing and affordable housing to meet the demand; and be it further

Resolved, that the Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba urge the Government of Manitoba develop a comprehensive housing strategy including but not limited to: the continuation of the current Rental Control Regulation; limits to the number of condominium conversions; increasing of funding for forgivable loans to be used as deposits for mortgages and renovations on existing housing stock, expanding the boundaries of the funded loans to include St. Boniface, Fort Rouge, Elmwood and Transcona; and be it further

Resolved, that Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba urge the Government of Manitoba develop and apply a comprehensive gender lens, a diversity lens and accessibility lens to all of the existing and future initiatives in order to comply with Canada's ratification of the UN CEDAW Convention and its Optional Protocol – United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women; and be it further

Resolved, that the Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba urge the Government of Manitoba to develop a housing strategy that will increase the housing stock for all residents of Manitoba.

2011.3: ACCESSIBILITY-RIGHTS LEGISLATION FOR MANITOBANS

Whereas, Manitobans with disabilities face a multitude of barriers that limit their enjoyment of many basic life activities that others take for granted; and

Whereas, the barriers they face prevent their full participation in their communities in areas including employment, education, job training, communications, housing, public and private transportation, health care and social services; and

Whereas, the number of people with disabilities continues to increase at a rate greater than the growth of the general population; and

Whereas, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Canadian Human Rights Act and the Manitoba Human Rights Code establish the right to equitable access for all persons with disabilities; and

Whereas, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the human rights codes are essential but do not provide for the timely achievement of an fully inclusive society for persons with disabilities; and

Whereas, the Government of Canada ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on March 11, 2010 which binds State Parties to new far-reaching obligations including taking appropriate measures to ensure persons with disabilities have access on an equal basis with others, therefore be it

Resolved, that the Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba adopt as policy support for provincial accessibility-rights legislation that requires the orderly and timely removal of barriers to equitable access faced by Manitobans with disabilities and that prevents the creation of new barriers; and be it further

Resolved, that the accessibility legislation reflect gender analysis; and be it further

Resolved, that the Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba urge the Government of the Province of Manitoba to

a) develop and introduce strong and effective accessibility-rights legislation that requires the orderly and timely removal of barriers to equitable access faced by Manitobans with disabilities and that prevents the creation of new barriers; and

continued

b) develop and introduce strong and effective accessibility-rights legislation that is consistent with the following:

- Covers all disabilities
- Reflects principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity
- Moves beyond the complaints-driven system to comprehensively address discrimination and barriers
- Establishes a definite target date to achieve a barrier-free Manitoba
- Requires the development of clear, progressive, mandatory and date-specific standards in all major areas related to accessibility that will apply to public and private sectors
- Establishes a timely and effective process for monitoring and enforcement of the standards
- Incorporates ongoing leadership roles for the disability community in the development of legislation and standards
- Supersedes all other provincial legislation, regulations or policies that provide lesser protections
- Doesn't diminish other legal and human rights protections
- Reflects gender analysis.

2011.4 THE RIGHT OF A PATIENT TO ACCESS HIS OR HER OWN COMPLETE ELECTRONIC HEALTH RECORD

Whereas, an individual has a right, on request, to examine and receive a copy of his or her personal health information under Manitoba's Personal Health Information Act; and

Whereas, a patient may have a number of different doctors and numerous health records that require a high degree of co-ordination and communication over a number of years; and

Whereas, an individual needs to have access to his or her complete personal health information in order to take responsibility for personal health management; and

Whereas, patients in other jurisdictions in Canada are now empowered to participate more effectively in their own care through secure electronic access to their complete electronic health records from their personal computers; and

Whereas, authorized members of a health care team in Manitoba can already access a patient's complete electronic health record, in Manitoba the patient is denied this right; therefore be it

Resolved, that the Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba adopt as policy support for the right of patients to secure electronic access to their own complete electronic health records from their personal computers, or other electronic devices, and be it further

Resolved, that the Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba urge the Government of Manitoba to legislate the right of patients to secure electronic access to their own complete electronic health records from their personal computers, or other electronic devices.

Definition of Electronic Health Record

An Electronic Health Record (EHR) is a private and secure network of systems that connect information from the various points of patient care such as public health, primary care offices, hospitals, community health centres, long-term care facilities, labs, pharmacies, and diagnostic imaging clinics. (Source: Canada Health Infoway)

2011.5 BILINGUAL SERVICES FOR SURVIVORS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Whereas, all individuals have the right to live free of fear and abuse; and

Whereas, domestic violence occurs across all socio-economic and cultural groups; and

Whereas, the Province of Manitoba has a French Language Services Policy which requires taxpayer- sponsored programs and agencies to develop a French language strategy to meet the needs of the francophone minority in Manitoba; and

Whereas, the Manitoba 1- 877-977-0007 Crisis-line receives inquiries in French from within and outside of Manitoba; and

Whereas, there are very limited numbers of French-speaking staff working in domestic violence shelters and Second Stage Housing establishments to implement and staff the current 1- 877-977-0007 Crisis-line; and

Whereas, there is no shelter that primarily serves francophone women; and

Whereas, the Province of Manitoba has a goal to receive 20,000 newcomers annually by the year 2015 and many would be from French-speaking countries; and

Whereas, people who are stressed by numerous co-existing life challenges (i.e. poverty, alienation, moving, unemployment, racism, poor housing conditions, lack of resources,

gaps in community supports) are at greater risk of having relationship struggles, which can escalate into domestic violence; therefore be it

Resolved, that Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba adopt as policy, support for bilingual services are provided in French and English a) to callers of the 1- 877- 977-0007 Crisis-line and b) to residents of domestic violence shelters and/or those in Second Stage Housing; and be it further

Resolved, that the Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba support the establishment of a domestic violence shelter for francophone women; and be it further

Resolved, that Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba urge the Government of Manitoba - Secretariat for Francophone Affairs to ensure that bilingual services are provided in French and English a) to callers of the 1- 877- 977-0007 Crisis-line and b) to residents of domestic violence shelters and/or those in Second Stage Housing; and be it further

Resolved, that Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba urge the Government of Manitoba to establish a domestic violence shelter for francophone women.

2011.6: ACTIONS TO SUPPORT ADULT LITERACY PROGRAMMING FOR LOW-INCOME MOTHERS AND SINGLE PARENTS

Whereas, the International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey, released in 2005, revealed that 42% of Canadians aged 16-65 are functioning at Literacy Stages 1 and 2, below the literacy level required to function fully in modern society; and

Whereas, 15% more women than men at Literacy Stages 1 and 2 are unemployed or low income, meaning that they are living on social assistance and/or in poverty; and

Whereas, many women at lower levels of literacy and living in poverty are raising children single-handedly, given that 80% of single parents are mothers; and

Whereas, mothers and single parents living in poverty consequently face multiple barriers to attending literacy programming; and

Whereas, maternal (parental) educational attainment is known to be a critical factor in educational attainment of children; and

Whereas, the United Nations recognizes the transformative effect on both a family and the wider community when a mother is literate and acknowledges that the investment

in literacy for women yields high economic, social and cultural development dividends;
and

Whereas, the Manitoba government has passed an Adult Literacy Act and has in the past actively endorsed the Pan-Canadian Literacy Strategy, which promotes a broad definition of literacy for full participation in our social, cultural, economic and political life, therefore be it

Resolved, that the Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba adopt as policy that the Government of Manitoba be urged to revitalize its long-term vision and strategy for maternal literacy to help break the cycle of intergenerational poverty and low educational attainment, by ensuring that low-literacy and low income mothers and single parents who are raising the next generation of Manitobans have substantive equality of access to adult literacy programming, not just for work but also for personal and family purposes; and be it further

Resolved, to urge the Government of Manitoba:

1. To fully implement a broader definition of literacy, as articulated by UNESCO, so that literacy is understood to be culturally specific and socially connected;
2. To recognize that traditional, training- or employment-directed literacy programs do not adequately reflect the needs and realities of a critical group of educationally at-risk Manitobans who have the primary responsibility for child-rearing;
3. To analyze Manitoba's Stage 1 and 2 literacy population through a gender and socio-cultural lens in order to define the vision and aims of "family literacy" more precisely and strategically;
4. To prioritize specialized programming for low literacy, low income mothers and single parents as a cornerstone in the Province's efforts to further improve key determinants of social health like community development and connection, safety, justice, personal health, civic participation, family stability, and social cohesion;
5. To commit to an increased, long-term investment in programming that addresses the specialized learning and support needs of multi-barriered mothers and single parents, with the express intention of breaking the cycles of low literacy and poverty;
6. To develop and provide new guiding frameworks, delivery formats and supports to make it possible for more low literacy, low-income mothers and single parents to attend programming that improves literacy skills for personal, family and community purposes;
7. To identify literacy-sensitive policy areas that affect low income mothers and single parents, so that opportunities for effective partnerships are maximized; and be it further

Resolved, that The Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba encourage all its affiliates to keep Manitobans with Stage 1 and 2 literacy skills in mind when they design and distribute their informational materials.

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN OF CANADA RESOLUTIONS WITH PROVINCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The following resolutions were passed at the national level, but are included here because they have provincial recommendations or implications.

2007.7 Protection of Children From Violent Video Games

Resolved, that the National Council of Women of Canada urge its Provincial and Local Councils of Women to urge their respective governments to launch a concentrated media education campaign for adults and children to make them aware of the dangers of violent video games and to provide appropriate educational programs in school systems.

2007.1 (Policy Update) Women and HIV/AIDS

Resolved, that the National Council of Women of Canada adopt as policy that the needs of women with HIV and AIDS be fully addressed; and be it further

Resolved, that the National Council of Women of Canada reiterate to the Government of Canada the need for research, clinical trials and equal access for treatment for women with HIV/AIDS; and to provide education programs for the public and professionals to identify and support women with HIV/AIDS; and be it further

Resolved, that that the National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to:

- a) provide anonymous HIV testing in all areas under its jurisdiction
- b) continue promoting the equality of women so that abused women are not vulnerable to HIV infection from their partners; and
- c) provide funding for targeted programs that address drug use and its risks which acknowledge sex trade as the ripple effect of addictions; and
- d) be more proactive in the global efforts to provide Anti- Retroviral Treatment for AIDS; and
- e) provide more effective prenatal care for aboriginal women, as they are disproportionately affected by HIV/AIDS, so that their children are less likely to be born HIV+; and
- e) strengthen the penalties for knowingly infecting a partner; and be it further

Resolved, that the National Council of Women of Canada request Provincial Councils of Women and, where appropriate, Local Councils of Women to urge their respective Provincial Governments to:

- a) provide anonymous HIV testing in all provinces; and
- b) provide funding for more treatment centres and training for more HIV specialists; and
- c) provide funding for needle exchange programs, detox centres and addiction centres; and
- d) provide more effective prenatal care for aboriginal women, as they are disproportionately affected by HIV/AIDS, so that their children are less likely to be born HIV+.

2009.2 The Need to Protect the Environment through Comprehensive Federal or Joint Federal/Provincial Environmental Assessments

Resolved, that the National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to ensure that all projects within the Provincial or Federal jurisdiction, having the potential to harm the environment, be subject to an appropriate Federal or joint Federal/Provincial Environmental Assessment that is transparent, ensures rigorous scientific input and scrutiny, allows meaningful public access to the process, and provides enhanced project scrutiny before proceeding to the regulatory stage.

2010.1 (Policy Update) Making Midwifery Services Available to All Who Wish to Use Them

Resolved, that the National Council of Women of Canada and the relevant provincial Councils urge their respective governments to give priority to: passing the necessary midwifery legislation and regulations, and increasing the number of midwifery training seats and funded positions for practising midwives in order to make their services accessible to all women in Canada.

2010.3 (Policy Update) Elimination of Coercive, Violent and Abusive Prostitution

Resolved, that the National Council of Women of Canada urges the Federal, Provincial, Territorial and Municipal governments of Canada:

- a) to provide a full range of social and economic services and support systems, to ensure that prostitutes have realistic options to exit prostitution, and
- b) to eliminate the procurement of prostitution, wherever it may occur, including through the internet or other electronic means, without criminalizing prostitutes.

2011.1 (Emerging Issue) The Need for All Canadians to have Access to Sufficient Resources to Cover the Necessities of Life

Resolved, that the National Council of Women of Canada reiterate from the 1948 United Nations Declaration of Human Rights as policy that everyone has “the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of oneself and one’s family, including food, clothing, housing, necessary social services, and to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his/her control with “motherhood and childhood entitled to special care and assistance”; and be it further

Resolved, that the National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to develop an anti-poverty strategy that:

- a) works to improve daily living conditions of people, with special attention being given to single mothers, older women, refugee women, women with disability, and Aboriginal women living off reserve, at risk of food and shelter insecurity by increasing the Federal Social Transfer to the Provincial and Territorial Governments;
- b) holds the provinces and territories accountable for using additional benefits to social or income assistance recipients so that they have the resources to buy sufficient nutritional food and to live in stable, safe housing;
- c) implements a National Housing strategy without delay
- d) increases funding to on-reserve Aboriginals, given the exclusive federal responsibility for housing on reserves, in order to alleviate their food and shelter insecurity, paying particular attention to the unsafe, overcrowded and often mold-infected condition of much Aboriginal housing, and lack of access to safe drinking water; and
- e) develops an integrated national policy to reduce health inequities among Canadians by addressing the social determinants of health; and be it further

Resolved, that the National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to work with provincial and territorial governments to ensure that their minimum wage policies support a living wage.

APPENDIX

- i. Background for Resolutions
- ii. Federate members of Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba, National Council of Women of Canada, Council of Women of Winnipeg
- iii. PCWM 2009-2011 Activity Highlights

A. BACKGROUND FOR RESOLUTIONS

2007.3 PLASTIC BAGS

Plastic grocery bags are inexpensive and convenient for both consumers and retailers. They protect goods while they are being transported, and they often serve an advertising function for the retailer. There are circumstances in which a plastic bag would be the container of choice for transporting some goods, like meat, for example. Plastic bags can be re-used for many purposes: for garbage, pet waste, and storage among other uses.

However, it has been estimated that Ontarians use 7-million plastic bags each day and that Manitobans use over 100 million per year. By weight plastic bags constitute less than one percent of landfill waste, but post-consumer plastic bags are awkward to handle. It takes 150,000 bags to make a tonne. While the value of the plastic is low, it is costly and takes energy to collect the product. In Winnipeg the bags cannot be put into the blue box system because they clog up the machinery that sorts the recyclables.

Disposable plastic bags are generally made from either #2 plastic (high-density polyethylene or HDPE) or #4 plastic (low-density polyethylene or LDPE). These come from refined petroleum, and they do not easily decay in landfill sites. Biodegradable bags break down into smaller bits of plastic in a landfill. Compostable bags can be made out of non-fossil fuel products, but they are more expensive and are difficult to compost in back yard composters, and when they do breakdown, they release methane gas that contributes to global warming. When blowing in the wind, they are as much a hazard as the non-biodegradable bags.

(Source: a policy paper of Resource Conservation Manitoba)

2008. LOBBYISTS REGISTRATION LEGISLATION AND CODE OF CONDUCT FOR LOBBYISTS IN MANITOBA AND WINNIPEG

The original definition of "lobbyist" is one who frequents the lobby of a legislative assembly for the purpose of influencing members' votes, to solicit the votes of members. (The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary)

The federal Act does not define the word "lobbyist". It defines two types of individuals - consulting lobbyists and in-house lobbyists - in respect of whom reporting obligations apply. An essential condition of lobbyist status is some form of remuneration. An individual acting in a volunteer capacity is not a lobbyist under the federal Act.

Quebec's lobbyist legislation covers an organization lobbyist for whom lobbying on behalf of an association or other non-profit is a significant part of the job or function. Toronto is unique in Canadian lobbyist regulation and laws as it covers unpaid, voluntary lobbyists.

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Government of Manitoba. The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Conflict of Interest Act, RSM 1987, c. L112.

Democracy Watch, Government Accountability and Ethics Campaign
web-site: <http://www.dwatch.ca/camp/ethicdir.html>

2009.1 RESOLUTION ON ENDOCRINE-DISRUPTING CHEMICALS

Research done by Karen Kidd at the Experimental Lakes shows that minuscule amounts of estrogen, such as are found in municipal waste water, can seriously disrupt the reproductive functions of fish and other aquatic life and, over time, can severely affect fish populations. In addition to the effect on the reproductive system, endocrine disrupters affect the immune system and are linked to some cancers. Estrogens and estrogen mimickers are known to affect human populations as well. Millions of pregnant women were given DES (Diethylstilbestol) a synthetic estrogen. Their daughters have an increased risk of a rare cancer of the cervix and vagina. In some hot spots, lower sperm counts and an increase of estrogen related cancers have been identified in the population, although it is difficult to identify which chemicals are responsible. It does not appear that there is a danger to human populations from this source in Manitoba, but the threat to aquatic life is real. One estrogen mimicker, PBDE (polybromide dephenyl ether), a flame retardant, has been found in the waters of Lake Winnipeg.

It is not known what level of estrogens and other endocrine disruptors are found in the Red River downstream of Winnipeg's Sewage Treatment plants; the City of Winnipeg does not test the effluent. The Province of Manitoba tests the river water downstream of the plant, between Winnipeg and Selkirk, twice a year, but the battery of pharmaceuticals for which they test does not include estrogens and synthetic estrogens. The problem is not that these chemicals are persistent but that they find their way into the river on a consistent basis. EE2 (ethinylestradiol) is found in the urine of women on birth control pills, and other estrogens and progesterone are found in the urine of women on hormone replacement therapy. These are fed into the sewer system on a daily basis.

Research Provided By

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Charles S. Wong, Ph.D., Richardson College for the Environment, University of Winnipeg
Vince Palace, Ph.D., Fish Physiology, Department of Fisheries and Oceans
Wendy Ralley, Water Quality Management Manitoba Water Stewardship
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2011.1 ADEQUATE FUNDING FOR SUSTAINABLE FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRES IN SUBSIDIZED HOUSING COMMUNITIES

Evidence of Need

Manitoba Housing prioritizes women and children leaving domestic violence and refugees coming from war torn countries. Therefore, subsidized housing communities

are unnatural communities consisting predominately of women and children with layers of issues – poverty, mental and physical health problems, disabilities, poor self esteem, low education, low literacy levels, and few marketable job skills, addictions and poor communication, relationship and parenting skills. Many are dealing with past traumas including the atrocities of war, upheaval, grief and loss and culture shock. The prevalence of criminal activity, substance abuse and gang activity are huge issues in every subsidized housing community. Families tend to be fearful of their neighbours, and with good reason, as they witness drug dealings, gang activity and domestic violence. This in turn causes vicarious trauma and contributes to their generally feeling unsafe.

Many refugee families are from Eritria, Ethiopia, Congo, Somalia, Sudan, Afghanistan, and Iraq. There are also high percentages of families living in these communities who are of aboriginal ancestry. They are often struggling with the aftermath of the residential school system and have not had positive parenting role models. Many live with depression and in isolation. Without intervention, many of the children growing up in these housing developments are headed for school failure, early school drop-out and with few options; many will be lured into gangs or drift into unhealthy life styles. Many will have serious mental health issues or will find solace in drugs or alcohol.

Parents are the primary protective agents for their children. In order for parents to do well by their children, to be attuned to their children's needs, they need to be healthy and self confident, to have hope in the future, basic parenting skills and a support system. The culture of poverty and deprivation, in addition to victimization by families of origin, husbands, boyfriends, systems, and in the case of refugees, the experiences of civil war have contributed to women functioning at a survival level. Most are mothers and their primary concerns are feeding their children and keeping them safe. Equality for women and their full participation in the economic, social and democratic life of Canadian Society is so far from their reality that it is not even on their radar screens.

Profile of one housing community (Tuxedo/Edgeland/Doncaster):

- 147 housing units
- Approximately 325 children and youth
- Reportedly three youth gangs operate in the community
- Approximately 65% female –headed single parent households
- Newcomer families comprise 46.5 % of community

This housing community is situated adjacent to an affluent neighbourhood and people living there experience social/emotional isolation and rejection from the larger community. There is military housing nearby and reported animosity between military families and families residing in the development. Youth report that they do not feel safe due to drug dealing and gangs and do not feel welcome at the local community recreational centres.

The Tuxedo housing community is typical of the six housing communities within which The Family Centre of Winnipeg is operating Family Resource Centres. Some, such as Westgrove (Charleswood) and Plessis (Transcona), are on the outskirts of the city and consequently access to goods and services without a vehicle is difficult. Inner city residents have the advantage of a plethora of social service agencies available to them and many grants are directed to these inner city neighbourhoods e.g. Neighbourhoods Alive, and the Centennial Project which currently are not available to subsidized housing communities in suburban locations.

Model of Intervention

Past interventions, including tenant associations and un-resourced on-site programs designed through top-down approaches, have been marginally effective at best. This is because they do not respond to the needs and interests of tenants and they fail to recognize the need for paid staff coordination and outreach.

Subsidized housing developments that have funding in place and mechanisms to facilitate resident involvement in identifying the kinds of programming they want and need, are showing that they can be positive, healthy environments for families.

Family Centre of Winnipeg has developed a model of intervention that is having remarkable success. Tenants report that they feel safer; there is a growing sense of social connectedness; there is growth in parent-child relationships; and there is growth in community leadership. Many individuals, especially the women, are growing in trust, confidence and self esteem.

- Tenant Advisory Committees identify and prioritize the issues and all programs and services are developed with the approval of these committees. Membership is open to anyone residing in the community. All issues are open for discussion and decisions are made on a consensus model with equal opportunity/access and respect as the basic premises.
- Steering Committees comprised of service providers and stake holders e.g. public health, social assistance, housing staff, the local school, day care, churches, police, child welfare, city recreation departments, YM/YW, MLAs etc., are able to respond to the needs identified by the Tenant Advisory Committees by modifying programs and developing new resources. Projects have evolved in all housing developments in response to Tenant Advisory Committee requests.
- Core Staffing – The Family Centre of Winnipeg provides core staffing in the Family Resource Centres to engage and empower tenants, support grass root leadership development and to ensure that programs and services are community driven, accessible and coordinated. Programs and services are the medium for staff and families to work together.
- Programs and services are unique to each subsidized housing community however the following needs have consistently been identified:

- *Safe secure base* – Family Resource Centre staff address distrust and safety concerns through outreach and provision of an informal, inclusive, warm environment where tenants are known by name, parenting is valued and children are nurtured. Neighbours meet neighbours and circles of support begin to develop.
- *Food security* – mothers worry about feeding their children and so community kitchens, food banks, community cupboards have developed in all Family Resource Centres.
- Once basic needs are met, tenants identify the need for *resources to deal with “wellness issues”* e.g. parenting, school readiness, domestic abuse, addictions, anger management, stress, one-on-one counselling.
- *Family and community cohesiveness* develops through drop-in, breakfast programs, Family Fun Nights and community celebrations.
- *Empowerment and confidence* develops through volunteerism which often leads to paid work experience within the centre and sometimes to full time employment with The Family Centre of Winnipeg or elsewhere (18 tenants are currently employed).
- Programs unique to each FRC – Share the Magic libraries established by MLAs, Beavers, Girl Guides and Scouting, Kids in the Kitchen (funded by Weston Foundation), after school programming (city recreation staff), Sports Programs for Inner City, Lunch Program (tenant volunteers make 60 lunches/week for their local school for children arriving without lunch), Baker’s and Crafter’s Coops (ACU), Neighbourhood Immigrant Settlement Worker (LIM), and many more.
- Adult Learning Centres – Two communities (Mayfair and Westgrove) identified the need for literacy programming and so with funding from Advanced Education and Literacy two Adult Learning Centres were established. This year an adult learner at Westgrove won the Prime Minister’s Literacy Award for Manitoba.

All Aboard

In May 2009, the Province of Manitoba established a new Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion Strategy entitled, All Aboard, and has committed considerable resources to reducing poverty. A newly established Minister’s Advisory Committee on Education, Poverty and Citizenship has identified the following four “Pillars of Social Inclusion”:

- Safe, Affordable Housing in Supportive Communities
- Strong Healthy Families
- Accessible Coordinated Services
- Education, Jobs and Income Support

Family Resource Centres in subsidized housing communities provide the means to deliver on this strategy for some of the most vulnerable families in Manitoba.

Ministerial Commitment

In February 2008, The Minister of Family Services and Housing, Gord Mackintosh, announced at a press conference that The Family Centre would open Family Resource Centres in three additional subsidized housing communities. Manitoba Housing identified the three housing communities that they considered to be in greatest need, namely, Westgrove, Mayfair and Tuxedo. Subsequently, it was made known that \$45,000 had been allocated for each Family Resource Centre. For safety reasons, it is necessary to have two staff present at all times, therefore this allocation is insufficient to cover even the basic costs. Without provision of adequate, sustainable funding at least two Family Resource Centres could be forced to close during this fiscal year.

Summary

This innovative family and community capacity building approach is respectful of the participants, listens to their voices and has achieved remarkable success where many other efforts have failed. The first Family Resource Centre opened in 2002. Since that time Manitoba Housing and the Minister of Family Services have taken note of the excitement generated by this approach and requested that we expand into other marginalized communities. Since Family Centre of Winnipeg staff focus on engagement and building a secure base, many other collateral agencies and professionals have approached us to join their energies and resources with our in order to reach these at-risk populations.

Tremendous gains have been made toward our stated goal: to have empowered individuals living in healthy families within well-connected, supportive communities. Tremendous gains have been made especially for the women and children living in these subsidized housing communities. And, as stated so well by Ka Ni Kanichihk Inc., “Women’s lives are changed overall as they grow in confidence and self esteem. As women are heard and as they come to believe that they have some power and control over their lives, they are able to improve outcomes for themselves, their children and their communities. The reality of women’s lives, especially women living in poverty, must be reflected in government policy and funding decisions.”

2011.2: A COMPREHENSIVE HOUSING STRATEGY FOR MANITOBANS

(1) The current vacancy rate has hovered around 1% for the past two decades, in contrast to the 6-7% vacancy rate which is more likely to ensure a healthy housing market that offers safe, clean, competitive sound housing stock to provide the citizens with some choice and upward mobility;

The average rental apartment vacancy rate in Canada's 35 major centres increased slightly to 2.9 per cent in April 2010 from 2.7 per cent in April 2009. Results of the 2010 Rental Market Survey released by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) reveal that, in April 2010, the centres with the lowest vacancy rates were Québec City (0.4 per cent), Regina (0.8 per cent), Winnipeg (1.0 per cent), and St. John's (1.1 per cent). At a provincial level, Manitoba and Newfoundland and Labrador posted the lowest vacancy rates at 1.0 per cent and 1.1 per cent, respectively.

“Rental construction and competition from the condominium market added upward pressure on vacancy rates and historically low mortgage rates attracted renter households towards homeownership over the last year,” said Bob Dugan, Chief Economist at CMHC's Market Analysis Centre. (See www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca)

(2) CBC /Radio-Canada news reported on CKSB Radio on February 16, 2011 “That Manitoba has reached a record influx of newcomers unsurpassed since 1947 - this past year (2010) 15,800 newcomers were received in Manitoba”.

(3) The Convention CEDAW was signed and ratified by Canada on July 17/80 & Dec 10/81 respectively and the CEDAW Optional Protocol accession is dated October 18, 2002.

2011.3: ACCESSIBILITY-RIGHTS LEGISLATION FOR MANITOBANS

This PCWM resolution is based on a resolution put forth by Barrier-Free Manitoba, a non-partisan, non-profit, disability initiative formed in 2008 that is seeking that the Province of Manitoba enact strong and effective legislation that requires the removal of existing barriers and prevents the creation of new ones. PCWM was asked for its support.

A Minister Responsible for Persons with Disabilities has already been designated in Manitoba. The Minister's mission is to foster the full and equal participation of persons with disabilities in all segments of society within the framework of public policy, programs and legislation which fall under the jurisdiction of the provincial government but at this time the legislation has some gaps.

Documents Consulted

- (1) Manitoba Human Right's Commission 2009 Annual Report indicated that mental and physical disability discrimination accounted for 47% of all human rights complaints files with the commission
- (2) www.gov.mb.ca/hrc/publications/news_releases/10-27-2010.html
- (3) Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005
- (4) www.accesson.ca/en/mcss/programs/accessibility

- (5) The European Union Disability Strategy. In pursuance of the United Nations Standard Rules on Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities, ec.europa.eu/employment_social/soc-prot/.../strategy_en.htm
- (6) Disability Discrimination Act 1992- Australia – www.heroc.gov.au/disability_rights/

2011.4 THE RIGHT OF A PATIENT TO ACCESS HIS OR HER OWN COMPLETE ELECTRONIC HEALTH RECORD

The Government of Canada, provincial and territorial governments are making a concerted effort to improve patient health care through the use of secure electronic health records. It is a challenging and expensive initiative. Some jurisdictions such as Alberta and B.C. are moving ahead with patient access. As of January 2011, Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre in Toronto had about 10,500 patients accessing their records through MyChart. In Manitoba, access to EHRs is gradually becoming available to authorized health care providers but, so far, not to the patient even though, under the Personal Health Information Act, the patient has the right of access to his or her health records. This resolution is designed to encourage Manitoba patients' right of access to their EHRs from their personal computers.

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<http://www.commonwealthfund.org/Content/Publications/Fund-Reports/2010/Jun/Mirror-Mirror-Update.aspx>

Give control of electronic health care records back to patients. Stephen Strauss. Canadian Broadcasting Company, March 18 2010.

<http://www.cbc.ca/health/story/2010/03/16/f-vp-strauss-electronic-health-records.html>

2011.5 BILINGUAL SERVICES FOR SURVIVORS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The French Language Services March 1999 - This policy of the Government of Manitoba recognizes the fact that the French-speaking population of Manitoba is a constituent of one of the fundamental characteristics of Canada. The policy's purpose is to allow this community and the institutions serving it to access comparable government services in the language of the laws of Manitoba.

PROVINCE LAUNCHES SIX-POINT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PREVENTION STRATEGY
November 1, 2010

www.gov.mb.ca/chc/press/top/2010/11/2010-11-01-102200-10085.html

2011.6: ACTIONS TO SUPPORT ADULT LITERACY PROGRAMMING FOR LOW-INCOME MOTHERS AND SINGLE PARENTS

BACKGROUND

In 2005, the Minister of Finance called for the development of a “national literacy strategy with provinces and territories”. The case for a Pan-Canadian literacy strategy was considered important to Canada’s economic, political, social and cultural survival. The strategy associates literacy with economic productivity, but also with societal health in areas like justice, community development, EI programming, personal and family stability, healthcare, rural and northern initiatives, as well as immigrant, refugee and settlement policies.

A broadly defined literacy strategy is needed, because such a high percentage of the working age population has literacy skills below the level needed to function effectively in a modern society and economy. The figures have remained unchanged between 1994 and 2003, and, in fact, the number of working age Canadians with low skills has increased from 8 to 9 million due to population growth.

However, we need to broaden our perspective on the statistics related to literacy. In the many reports on literacy, we have analyzed the numbers regionally (urban vs rural, north vs south), culturally (Aboriginal, immigrant, white, Anglophone, Francophone), occupationally (trades, primary industries, white-collar) and by age (youth, working age,

older adults). However, we have rarely looked at the information through a gender or socio-cultural lens.

Instead, particular emphasis has been placed on literacy for industry and business. As a result, funding has increased dramatically for work-related literacy, but funding for family and community-based literacy has not grown an equivalent amount. Yet women (more specifically mothers, and especially mothers living in poverty) are an important key to family literacy, the key to the future ... across regions and cultures.

The UN recognized this with its message on Literacy Day 2010:

“Literacy transforms the lives of women, their families, communities and societies. Literate women are more likely to send their children, especially their girls, to school. By acquiring literacy, women become more economically self-reliant and more actively engaged in their country’s social, political and cultural life. All evidence shows that investment in literacy for women yields high development dividends”.

The discussion in the UN is about literacy in “far-away” places like South America, Africa, Asia. Yet women in Canada are also experiencing economic and social exclusion as a result of their literacy levels.

- 15.1% of women at Literacy 1 are unemployed (compared to 10.7% men). Of the ones who are employed, 56.9% are employed in low-paying jobs (compared to 25.5% for men).
- 10.2% of women at Literacy 2 are unemployed (compared to 7.4% men). Of the ones who are employed, 46.3% are in low-paying jobs (compared to 19.4% for men).

Not a part of the workplace perspective or economic agenda, the literacy needs of unemployed and underemployed women appear to be deemed less worthy of significant investment, despite their disproportionate representation as single parents, elder caregivers, and providers of food and security for children. (45% of social assistance recipients are single parents.)

Few people with low literacy come forward for assistance. Reasons range from lack of financial support, family responsibilities, to lack of social supports (childcare, transportation) and lack of confidence. It is clear that women would be disproportionately affected by these barriers. In fact, it would be revealing to see how many women (single parents) are prevented from working or improving their literacy because of these variables, thereby perpetuating the cycle of poverty and low literacy.

Taking a gender and socio-cultural perspective on low literacy could make it more possible to address those barriers, and could encourage the development of appropriate programming and services. Supporting women (single parents) in their struggle to access literacy education would be a most worthy investment.

“If you think literacy is expensive ... try ignorance”.
Dorothy Silver, Literacy Action Day, February 1999.

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Secretary-General, United Nations, Press Release September 8, 2010

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2005. Towards a Fully Literate Canada: Achieving National Goals through a Comprehensive Pan-Canadian Literacy Strategy (Ottawa, Ontario: Advisory Committee on Literacy and Essential Skills)

B. FEDERATE MEMBERS

PROVINCIAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN OF MANITOBA (May 2011)

Arthritis Society of Manitoba/NU Division
Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives
Canadian Mental Health Association - Eating Disorders Self-Help Program
Canadian Voice Of Women For Peace - Manitoba Chapter
CFUW Manitoba Council
Consumers Association of Canada (Manitoba) Inc.
Council of Women of Winnipeg
Elizabeth Fry Society of Manitoba
Family Centres of Winnipeg
Girl Guides of Canada, MB. Council
Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin Inc.
Immigrant Women's Association of Manitoba, Inc.
Legal Education and Action Fund (LEAF)
Literacy Partners of Manitoba
Manitoba Association of Home Economists
Manitoba Association of Women's Shelters
Manitoba Business & Professional Women's Clubs
Manitoba Child Care Association
Manitoba Dental Hygienist's Association
Manitoba Hydro, Employment Equity
Manitoba Provincial Exec. of Ukrainian Women's Association of Canada
Manitoba Women's Institute
MATCH International - MB Region
MB/NW Ontario Conference of United Church Women
Nova House
Prairie Women's Health Centre of Excellence
Reseau action femmes (Manitoba)
Salvation Army
Success Skills Centre
UNPAC (Mb) United Nations Platform for Action Committee (Manitoba)
Wolseley Family Place

Members of the Board of PCWM 2011-2012

President: Sharon Taylor
Past President: Marilyn McGonigal
Honorary Vice President (Advisor): Muriel Smith
Vice President Planning & Development: Karen Hoeft
Recording Secretary: Lorri Apps
Electronic Corresponding Secretary: Barbara Toews
Treasurer: Aster Abraham
Archives: Mary Scott
President Local Council: Arlene Draffin Jones
Members at Large: Barb Kendel, Anna Pazdzierski
Program: Peggy Barker
Membership Chair: Maxine Balbon
Communications Chair: Sherrie Steiner
Resolutions Chair: Margerit Roger
Resolutions (Resource): Muriel Smith, Mary Scott, Marilyn McGonigal, Sally Thomas, Carolyn Garlich

Special Committee

Poverty: Marilyn McGonigal; Major Karen Hoeft
Fundraising: Shirley Walker; Maxine Balbon
Program: Betty Hopkins, Chair
Youth Convener: Kristi Loeb

Members of the Board of PCWM 2010-2011

President: Marilyn McGonigal
Past President: Maxine Balbon
Recording Secretary: Pat Powell
Electronic Corresponding Secretary: Barb Toews
Treasurer: Karen Hoeft
Program: Betty Hopkins
Membership: Barb Kendel
Youth Convener: Daria Jorquera Palmer
Archives: Mary Scott, Joan Butcher
CWW Representative: Monika Palmer Feist
Resolutions: Sally Thomas
Resolutions: (Brief) Victoria Lehman
Resolutions: (Resource) Muriel Smith
Member at large & Rep. from WI Peggy Barker

Members of the Board of PCWM 2009-2010

President: Marilyn McGonigal
Past President: Maxine Balbon
Vice President: Barbara Toews
Treasurer: Major Karen Hoeft
Secretary: Pat Powell
Program: Peggy Barker
Membership: Barbara Kendel
Resolutions: Sally Thomas
Resolutions: Victoria Lehman (Brief)
Resolutions: Muriel Smith (Resource)
Youth Convener: Tanya Tran
Newsletter: Caitlin McIntyre
Archives Committee: Mary Scott and Joan Butcher
Members-at-Large: Betty Hopkins (Program)
CWW Representative: Monika Feist

Special Committees

Mental Health: Beverley Goodwin & Dr. June Menzies
Urban/Rural: Elizabeth Fleming
Poverty: Marilyn McGonigal and Major Karen Hoeft
Fund Raising: Arlene Draffin-Jones and Shirley Walker

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN OF CANADA

At the national level, the National Council of Women of Canada (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.

National Organizations

Action Canada for Population and Development
Anglican Church of Canada
Azerbaijan Cultural and Education Centre
Baha'i Community of Canada
Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies (CAEFS)
Canadian Association of Midwives
Canadian Council of Muslim Women (CCMW)
Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs
DES Action Canada
Federation of Junior Leagues
Girl Guides of Canada - Guides du Canada

Hadassah - WIZO
League of Ukrainian Women in Canada
National Association of Women and the Law
National Consultation of United Church Women
Canadian Federation for Sexual Health
Polish Canadian Women's Federation
The Salvation Army
Ukrainian Women's Association
Ukrainian Women's Organization of Canada
Canadian Victorian Order of Nurses (VON)
YWCA
Women's Missionary Society, W.D. The Presbyterian Church

Provincial Councils

Alberta
British Columbia
Manitoba
Saskatchewan
Quebec
Ontario

Study Groups

Born, Prince Edward Island
Oakville, Ontario

Local Organizations

Calgary, Alberta
Edmonton, Alberta
Halifax, Nova Scotia
Hamilton, Ontario
London, Ontario
Montreal, Quebec
New Westminster, British Columbia
Ottawa, Ontario
Prince Albert, Saskatchewan
St. Catharines, Ontario
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
Toronto, Ontario
Vancouver, British Columbia
Windsor, Ontario
Winnipeg, Manitoba

COUNCIL OF WOMEN OF WINNIPEG

Soroptimist's International of Winnipeg

Ukrainian Women's Assoc. of Canada (Winnipeg Branch)

CUPW - Winnipeg Local

University Women's Club of Winnipeg

Fort Garry Women's Resource Centre

Business and Professional Women Winnipeg Central

Mt. Carmel Clinic

Westminster United Church Outreach Committee

Winnipeg Citizens Coalition

Winnipeg General Hospital/Health Sciences Centre – Nurses' Alumnae

C. PCWM ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

For More Information see our web site: <http://www.pcwmanitoba.ca>

Overview

Over the past decade four Presidents, Elizabeth Fleming, Arlene Jones; Mary Scott and Maxine Balbon have strengthened our Council's administration and maintained our reputation for solid research and serious advocacy on civic and provincial issues; built up our federate membership and financial resources; brought our administration up to speed including a Web site, email; and re-located our office at the Society for Manitobans With Disabilities (SMD).

In 2005 we modernized our Constitution to reflect our current mission, priorities and procedures. The resources and services provided by the Manitoba Women's Advisory Council (Status of Women, Provincial Government) to assist non-profit women's equality groups such as our Councils over the years have helped us achieve our goals and we sincerely thank the staff and Status of Women for all their support.

Recent Activities (2009-10)

- **April 27, 2009** Provincial Land Use Policies Review at Norwood Hotel (consultations). E. Fleming and A. Draffin Jones represented PCWM.
- **May 6, 2009** The **DVD Documentary, "The Way We See It"** was launched at St Mary's Academy. The PCWM Mental Health Committee Co-Chairs, had worked for years to produce a documentary account of the difficulties families face when they have a member who suffers from a mental disease. The Documentary, "The Way We See It", narrated and directed by well-known journalist and social activist Lesley Hughes, was shown and discussed by a panel of people who had loved ones with mental illness or who were working with these patients.
- **May 11, 2009** PCWM celebrated our **60th Anniversary at Government House** hosted by Her Honour Ms Lenore Berscheid, wife of the Lieutenant Governor His Honour John Harvard. The theme was 'Women Working Together'.
- **May 26, 2009** Press Conference by the Social Planning Council of Manitoba and the Manitoba office of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives to launch the report: '**The view from here: Manitobans call for action to reduce poverty**'. PCWM contributed necessary substantial financial assistance to production of the report. PCWM has had direct involvement in the Make Poverty History Group and the previous Poverty Symposium Group that had organized a number of workshops leading up to this report. Shauna Mackinnon of CCPA prepared a

report reflecting about four year's work gathering information for a comprehensive analysis and recommendations for a plan that will reduce and eliminate poverty in Manitoba.

- **June 4 to 7, 2009** the **National Council of Women of Canada Annual General Meeting** was held in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan hosted by the Prince Albert Council of Women and was attended by nine members of the Manitoba Council.
- **June and July, 2009** Water Utilities Committee of PCWM and CWW was involved in **Water and Waste Utility** contract issue at City Hall
- **July 13, 2009** PCWM and CWW hosted a **public meeting** on proposed Corporate Water Utility at First Unitarian Church, 603 Wellington Ave, Winnipeg. Over 200 people attended. City Officials attended and spoke but did not take questions.
- **July 16, 2009** PCWM held our **Celebrating Women Fund Raising Gala** at Khartum Shrine House, 1155 Wilkes Avenue on. 7:30 to 11:00 pm. Funds raised sustain the Council and projects we undertake.
- **September 2009 – April 2010 Theme: Women and the Economy** - understanding the economic system that created the financial meltdown and its relevance to Canadian and Manitoba women.
- **September 17, 2009** General Meeting – **“Building Women’s Health on an Equity Foundation”** presentations by Margaret Haworth-Brockman of Prairie Women’s Health Centre of Excellence (PWHCE), and Joan Dawkins of Women’s Health Centre (WHC).
- **October 23, 2009**, PCWM sponsored the play, at the Gas Station Theatre, **“The Bush- Ladies School Tour”** an adaptation of the Fringe Play **“The Bush Ladies: In Their Own Words”**, about women pioneers in the Ontario bush in the 19th Century, which raised funds for the Theatre on the River Group project to perform the play in rural Manitoba high schools.
- **November 7, 2009 – Semi-Annual Meeting – “Living in Hard Times – Women and the Economy”**. Four women related their challenges in achieving economic self-reliance. The video **“Safe as Houses”**, Part V of a series based on the book, **“The Ascent of Money”**, by Niall Ferguson, was shown and discussed.
- **January 21, 2010** – Panel presentations and discussion of **“The Economic Meltdown – What will it Cost you?”**

- **February 9, 2010** PCWM and CWW met with Minister Ron Lemieux regarding the water and waste utility. Letters were written also in February and November, 2010.
- **February 11, 2010** PCWM held the annual **Federates Round Table Luncheon** at Wolseley Family Place, with lunch provided by the Women's Enterprise Centre. This is an annual event, with 2012 being our 6th Round Table.
- **March 18, 2010** General Meeting to consider **National Resolutions** to be considered at the NCWC AGM in May 2010.
- **May 8, 2010** **PCWM AGM in Carman, Manitoba** – Panel presentation **“Women and the Economy: Past the Perimeter”** - over 70 rural and urban women attended and heard about the enormous economic challenges facing rural women in their shrinking economy.

Recent Activities (2010-11)

- **May 27 – 30, 2010** – **NCWC AGM** in Toronto. PCWM and CWW agreed to host the AGM in 2011 in Winnipeg. Mary Scott became National President immediately following the meeting. From October 2010 to June 2011 a twenty member Local Arrangements Committee and sub-committees worked to organize a very successful AGM.
- **July 7, 2010** **4th Annual Celebrating Women Gala and Fundraiser** at Khartoum Shrine House, Winnipeg
- **July 26, 2010** – **The Right To Know Committee Meeting with the Premier Greg Selinger, Minister of Culture, Flor Marcelino and Clerk of the Executive Council and Cabinet Secretary, Paul Vogt** about ways to improve access to information (FIPPA). Manitoba Association of Rights and Liberties, Canadian Taxpayers' Federation (Manitoba) Canadian Association of Journalists (Manitoba) and PCWM were represented. A representative of Consumers' Association of Canada (Manitoba) was unable to attend. Members later met with the Conservatives and Liberals (September 16) to deliver our position on FIPPA .
- **August 19, 2010** **Strategic Directions** session guided by PCWM treasurer, Major Karen Hoeft of the Salvation Army. Decision: our main purpose is advocacy and the need to involve our federate members more in our advocacy goals. The focus is the political and personal challenges facing so many Canadian women and women's organizations
- **September 2010-April, 2011** **Theme: “Together We Are Stronger”**

- **September 23rd 2010 General Meeting** – Over 30 Federate representatives identified numerous issues and priorities facing their organizations – and need for further focused discussion.
- **November 20, 2010** Semi-Annual Meeting **The World Café** table discussions focused on the federate members’ issues and women’s issues arising under the present federal government’s policies.
- **January 20, 2011** Program on **The Literacy Legacy: the Impact of Mothers’ Literacy Levels on Future Manitoba Generations.**
- **April 20, 2011** the **Federal Election Candidates Environment Forum**, was held at the First Unitarian Universalist Church, with Council of Women of Winnipeg.
- **April 28, 2011 Annual General Meeting** A speaker from the Disabilities Issues Office of the Provincial Government spoke on the new Disabilities Legislation. Six new Resolutions passed. Sharon Taylor elected President along with new board.
- **June 2-5, 2011 National Council of Women of Canada’s (NCWC) Annual Meeting** at Viscount Gort Hotel Winnipeg, hosted by PCWM and CWW. A full agenda, with highlights being the program on Women and Mental Health and the signing of the Joint Declaration with the Native Women’s Association of Canada and the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, urging the Government of Canada to engage in open and meaningful dialogue with NWAC, in reporting back to CEDAW, with particular attention to addressing the disappearance and murder of Aboriginal women and girls.
- **July 13, 2011 5th Annual Celebrating Women Gala and Fundraiser**
- **September 14, 2011 Provincial Candidates Environment Forum** moderated by Terry McLeod from the CBC. PCWM partnered with Green Action Committee of the First Universalist Unitarian Church and the Manitoba Eco-Network –held at the Unitarian Church.
- **September - November, 2011 Theme: Healthy Eating and Eating Disorders**
- **September 22, 2011** Revisiting the **Strategic Plan of August 2010**
- **October 20, 2011** Member and advocate, Elaine Stevenson spoke on **Eating Disorders**
- **November 19, 2011 Semi-Annual Meeting, “A Weighty Issue: Varying Perspectives”**, panel and discussion on healthy eating - research and approaches to weight control; Also: Writing Resolutions

