

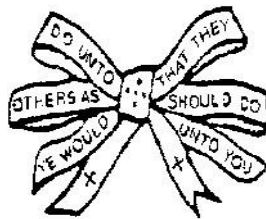
**THE PROVINCIAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN OF ONTARIO
LE CONSEIL DES FEMMES DE LA PROVINCE D'ONTARIO**

ANNUAL BRIEF

FOR PRESENTATION TO

THE GOVERNMENT OF ONTARIO

THE HONOURABLE DOUG FORD, PREMIER



1893

Edeltraud Neal, President

Maide Yazar, Vice-President Resolutions

**The Hon. Elizabeth Dowdeswell
Lieutenant Governor of Ontario
Honorary President, Provincial Council of Women of Ontario**

November 2019

BRIEF TO THE GOVERNMENT OF ONTARIO

PROFILE OF COUNCIL

The Provincial Council of Women of Ontario (PCWO) was founded in 1923 by the Ontario Committee of the National Council of Women of Canada (NCWC), which was founded in 1893. PCWO is a member of NCWC, and the International Council of Women established in 1888.

PCWO'S FEDERATED MEMBERS

LOCAL COUNCILS

London and Area Council of Women

Ottawa Council of Women

Niagara District Council of Women

Toronto & Area Council of Women

PROVINCIALY ORGANIZED SOCIETIES

Association of Early Childhood Educators - Ontario

Business and Professional Women's Clubs of Ontario

Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario

Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario

Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association

Ontario Dental Hygienists' Association

Ontario Home Economics Association

Polish Canadian Women's Federation

Ukrainian Women's Association of Canada – Eastern Executive

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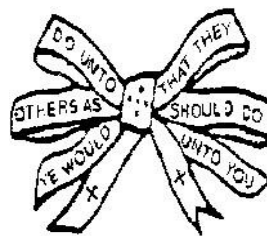
PREAMBLE

The Provincial Council of Women of Ontario (PCWO) is pleased to present its 2018 Annual Brief to the Government of Ontario and looks forward to hearing of the actions planned by the Premier and the appropriate Government Ministries to address our concerns.

This is the 96th Annual Brief presented to the Government of Ontario. Over the past decades the PCWO has been a leader in bringing the Government's attention to matters of concern to many Ontarians.

Established in 1923, as an affiliate of the National Council of Women (1893) the aim of the Council is to work for the betterment of conditions pertaining to women, family, community and society. PCWO is composed of 4 Local Councils, 9 Provincially Organized Societies.

This year, PCWO will be available on **Wednesday, November 20th, 2019, from 9:15 to 10:10 a.m. and from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. in Room 230, second floor of the Legislative Building** to present our Brief to the Government and to our members. We look forward to a dialogue with the appropriate Ministers or their representatives, and the responses of other political parties, on the content of the resolutions and on-going issues, which are presented in this Brief



.1893.

In 2018 the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario (PCWO) celebrated its 95th Anniversary. PCWO grew out of the Ontario Committee of National Council of Women of Canada (NCWC). The National Council of Women marks the 125th year since its founding. NCWC was founded in 1893 by Lady Ishbel Aberdeen, wife of the Governor General, together with the Dominion Women's Temperance Union, the Young Women's Christian Association, the Missionary Society of Canada, the Dominion Order of King's Daughters and the Dominion Women's Enfranchisement Association. Dr. John Bourinot drafted the Constitution. The motto for all Councils is the Golden Rule, expressed on the historic insignia of the tied bow. Over time, many civic, religious, professional, and political groups would join the non-sectarian, non-partisan Councils of Women "to further the application of the Golden Rule to society, customs and law".



The Honourable Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario
Legislative Building
Queen's Park, Toronto

November 9, 2019

Dear Mr. Ford,

Every year, for 96 years, the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario (PCWO) has been submitting its Annual Brief to the Premier and the members of the Ontario Government of the day, and to all MPPS. We are glad to be doing so again in preparation to our PCWO 2019 Semi - Annual Meeting on November 20th at Queen's Park, in Room 230, in the Legislative Building. We invite the politicians to drop in and give them the opportunity to respond to the concerns raised in the PCWO Annual Brief and/or speak about their own issues and projects. Each MPP is allowed 10 minutes.

Premier Ford, we also invite you to drop in at your convenience at Room 230 in the Legislative Building on Wednesday, November 20th, 2019 between 9:15 am and 4:00pm to meet with our members, and indicate your Government's approach to improving the lives of women and families in Ontario.

The PCWO brief deals again with the concerns of Ontario women, their families, their communities and the environment which surrounds us all. It will contain longstanding issues, and the new PCWO policy resolutions adopted in April 2019 which are added to our mandate and allow us to speak out on issues of common concerns of our member organizations. For your convenience we are providing a summary of our recommendations below. The texts of our indexed policies of the last 45 years can be found on our website www.pcwocanada.org

The Provincial Council of Women of Ontario is a non-partisan, non- sectarian, member- funded organization. We receive no government funds. PCWO is composed of 4 Local Councils, 9 Provincially Organized Societies. We are a member of the National Council of Women of Canada (1893) and of the International Council of Women.

We hope that you and your Government will be able to give some consideration to our recommendations on behalf of Ontario Women, their families and their communities.

Sincerely

Edeltraud Neal, President Provincial Council of Women of Ontario

**Recommendations of the 96th PCWO Annual Brief to the Ontario Government
November 9, 2019**

New Policies - Resolutions

Improving Conditions of Precarious Employment

Resolved #1 that the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario (PCWO) adopt as policy that there be an end to precarious employment; and be it further

Resolved #2 that PCWO urge the Government of Ontario to take immediate action to end precarious employment by:

- a) mandating paid sick days, two-week scheduling notice, and parity of benefits, pay and vacation for temporary and contract workers,
- b) increasing on-the-job training,
- c) securing as a permanent employee, any term employee who has been in the job for 3 years, and
- d) monitoring labour laws to ensure that employers are accountable for implementation of Ontario's Employment Standards Act.

Seasonal Agricultural Workers (SAW)

Resolved #1 that the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario adopt as policy that Seasonal Agricultural Workers (SAWs) be protected, treated fairly and made aware of their rights; and be it further

Resolved #2 that the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario urge the Government of Ontario to:

- a) enforce the provisions of the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program (SAWP) and the Temporary Foreign Workers Program (TFWP) to ensure that workers in these programs are paid the provincial seasonal average wage rate or better,
- b) revise Employment Standards so that no workers are excluded from protections,
- c) inspect all SAWs housing before, after and randomly throughout the season,
- d) ensure that workplace health and safety information is provided to SAWs in English, French and in their mother tongues,
- e) supply information about Ontario health coverage and how to access it in Canada to SAWs upon arrival,

- f) ensure that all SAWs receive a free medical exam before they return to their home country to confirm that they are free from workplace illness or injury, and
- g) facilitate access to the Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program (OINP) for all “low-skilled” workers by funding settlement and support services.

Supervised Opioid Consumption Sites:

Resolved #1 that the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario (PCWO) adopt as policy that supervised opioid consumption sites are a necessary service; and be it further

Resolved #2 that PCWO urge the Government of Ontario to:

- a) provide a non-judgemental environment for supervised opioid consumption sites,
- b) create supervised consumption sites that accommodate assisted injecting and the inhalation of drugs, and
- c) connect people who use drugs to rehabilitation, and other health and social services.

LONGSTANDING ISSUES

ECONOMICS and SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

- PCWO believes that this Government must invest in the people of Ontario. The cost of poverty is unsustainable when considering health, social, educational and institutional services costs. Every dollar invested in Ontarians to reduce poverty through adequate social assistance, liveable wages, health services for all, affordable housing and support services, brings a high rate of return, not only for families, but for communities and businesses alike
- PCWO supports a basic income program as a requirement to reduce and eliminate poverty. Therefore we encourage the government to re-invest in this project and report regular updates on any progress.
- PCWO supported increasing the minimum wage to \$15 in January of 2019 as a necessary part of closing the gender wage gap. With more women working at minimum wage jobs this is a key issue for women living in poverty. We urge the government to reconsider eliminating the planned increase in minimum wage

- PCWO agrees that it is time for the Ontario Government to meet the needs of families and provide universal child care at an affordable rate geared to income as they have done in Quebec. We urge the government to fund the immediate development of a universal child care program.
- The government should immediately commit to developing an early child care system within a defined timeframe. The system should provide care that is: high quality, affordable, accessible, publicly funded and geared to income, with sufficient spaces to meet the needs of Ontario families.
- Will the Ontario Government put the Pay Transparency Act into effect as a tool to *promote gender equality and equal opportunity in employment and in the workplace*?

HOUSING

- In the face of this growing housing emergency, the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario urges the Provincial government to immediately invest substantially in affordable, accessible, appropriate housing and work with all other levels of government, business, the public and service providers to alleviate and then get ahead of the housing crisis.

ENVIRONMENT

- PCWO is concerned that the Ontario's Legislative Scientist has been dismissed, and that the Independent Environment Commissioner, who was mandated to report on greenhouse gas emissions and energy conservation, has been replaced with government self-reporting through the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks, the later being of course necessary as a function of sound government operations in the first place, not as a replacement of an independent monitor.
- We note too, that for over 25 years the Province's Environmental Commissioner, under the Environmental Bill of Rights, monitored and reported on, government action and progress, or lack of same on significant environmental issues such as, loss of forest cover, toxic chemicals, environmental assessments, air pollution, waste management, fracking, wetlands protection, wildlife habitat, wilderness preservation, land use planning, water well regulation, and many others.
- Does the Ontario Government plan to appoint an independent environmental monitor?

- PCWO urges the Ontario Government to show that its Preserving and Protecting our Environment for the Future Generations Plan is scientifically sound, and will protect the environment, and reduce carbon emissions, so that Ontario can take its place as a climate change carbonreduction leader.
- PCWO urges the government to reduce its reliance on nuclear through a phased shut down and decommissioning of nuclear plants at the end of their life span. There are far too many risks and huge costs, which are growing quickly, as Ontario increasingly becomes a centre of nuclear activity.
- PCWO commends the Provincial government for its strong support of producer responsibility and its aim to optimize the blue box program as a part of the solution. PCWO agrees with the Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks, that the public “ *believes that every time they put something in the blue box they are reducing litter and waste and improving the environment .*”
- PCWO is cognizant of the importance of the Ontario Government’s plans for waste diversion, producer incentives, redesign of products to reduce waste and make them easier to recycle.
- We support reduction of food and organic waste from households and businesses, and of waste going to landfills.
- We are also very pleased that incineration of municipal waste is not being considered, since not only are incinerators, such as the one in the municipality of Peel, significant barriers to meeting waste diversion targets, but crucially, their stack gas emissions include CO2 and such dangerous toxic releases as mercury, dioxins and furans and tiny particles which go deep into the lungs. Incinerator bottom ash is also particularly dangerous and can leach into surrounding soil, so it has to be transported to and stored securely at a special site in the Sarnia area.
- PCWO urges the government to move very quickly on this important waste management plan, however we would ask that there be extensive consultation with the public on setting targets for each stage of the transformation process.

Land Use Planning

- We commend the government for withdrawing Bill 66, which would have allowed development for commercial/industrial uses, and encouraged

subsequent residential sprawl even within some areas of the Greenbelt, such as Niagara.

- It is to be hoped that the Ontario Government will rethink the *Small Area* exemptions and with the current review of the Provincial Policy Statement it will not be expanded province-wide

STATUS OF WOMEN, HEALTH AND SAFETY, SENIOR AFFAIRS

Violence Against Women: Workplace Harassment, Assault and Abuse

- While indigenous matters often get lost in the deep crack of federal – provincial jurisdictions, how will the Government of Ontario ensure the major recommendation of the Final Report of the Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls are also implemented in Ontario?
- What measures has the Ontario Government implemented or will implement to ensure that cases of police and other government workplace sexual harassment are appropriately investigated and followed up in a timely, dignified, and respectful manner?
- Will the Ontario Government consider making up for the shortfall in funding this fiscal year to the Province's 42 rape crisis centres?
- We do note the appointment of the Honorable Jill Dunlop, Minister without Portfolio, Associate Minister of Children and Women's Issues . PCWO congratulates the Minister on her appointment.
- It is our hope that the Hon. Jill Dunlop's Ministry jurisdiction will be focused on gaining legal and economic equality for Ontario women in all their diversity. And on eliminating gender based violence. We look to the Ontario Government to fund and empower the Minister so that her Ministry will be able to pursue the collaboration across the government to ensure a gender perspective and a gender analysis lens to be brought to bear on all government policy making

Health System Changes

- PSWs are the backbone of the home & long term care system in this province and deliver the majority of care to home care patients and long term care residents.

- It is estimated that there were 90,000 PSWs in Ontario in 2011. However, it should alarm every politician that the number of PSWs leaving their positions annually is higher than the number graduating each year.
- According to a recent HealthForceOntario survey (2018), over 50% of PSWs in Ontario are retained for fewer than five years; 43% reported burn out as the reason they left health care and 62% of those who are currently working would leave due to stress / burnout.
- These are very scary statistics and speak to the need for a fulsome and coordinated government driven health human resources strategy for both the home care and long term care sectors in this province.
- The PCWO strongly urges the Ontario Government to put in place measures to ensure an adequate, appropriate and well supported PSW workforce for citizens and also to ensure that publicly funded AND publicly provided home care services is increased as opposed to decreased in these health system changes inherent in Bill C-74 in order to ensure Ontario women are not disproportionately impacted.
- PCWO expects that the Ontario government will do its utmost to re-establish the trust of Ontarians in the safety and security of LTCH and retirement residences and that the Ontario Government will implement the recommendations of the Wettlaufer inquiry and monitor and enforce existing regulations and make provisions for new rules, regulations and measures to protect residents from intentional harm.
- PCWO commends the Retirement Homes Regulatory Authority (RHRA) on the launch of an updated new approach to routine home inspections as of July 4th 2019.

EDUCATION

- The Provincial Council of Women of Ontario (PCWO) was pleased to read the very thoughtful article in the Ottawa Citizen by the Hon. Stephen Lecce, Minister of Education; the Hon. Monte McNaughton, Minister of Labour; and the Hon. Jill Dunlop, Associate Minister of Children and Women's issues, indicating that the Ontario Government plans to "put the spotlight on high-tech and skilled trades", in order to combat youth unemployment and future skilled labour force shortages with investments in apprenticeship and STEM programs.
- PCWO has advocated with Ontario Governments over the span of more than 30 years for apprenticeship programs within "a flexible and adaptive education system that works for all students."

- PCWO commends the Ontario Government for embarking on a renewed effort of creating a successful apprenticeship and technological skills training system for a diversity of young Ontarians, including indigenous. PCWO will follow its progress.
- PCWO commends the Ontario Government on providing a Grades 9-12 revised First Nations, Métis and Inuit Curriculum for the beginning of the 2019 /20 school year. PCWO wants to urge the Ontario Government to make the education about “indigenous perspectives, contributions and histories” mandatory in all Ontario elementary and secondary schools.
- Nearly one-third of children and youth in Canada are overweight or obese – conditions that can result in increased risk of chronic disease such as Type II diabetes and cardiovascular disease.
- We urge the Ontario Government to make at least one Food and Nutrition course mandatory for all students in order to receive an Ontario Secondary School Diploma, and
- Make food and nutrition education a focus in all grades.
- PCWO commends the Ontario Government for finding a compromise for an appropriate Sex Education Curriculum that provides the students with the tools to recognize when they are being exploited, assaulted, bullied and enticed into unwanted actions upon their person and body. A factual, truthful education enables our children and young people to make sound decisions for a physically and mentally healthy life.

Autism Spectrum Disorder (2012)

Resolved#1 that the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario (PCWO) adopt as Policy support for immediate assessment and early intervention and treatment of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD); and

Resolved #2 that the PCWO urge the Government of Ontario to fund early diagnosis Autism Spectrum Disorder by assessing all infants and toddlers who display significant developmental delay or regression; and be it further

Resolved #3 that PCWO urge the Government of Ontario to immediately Implement programs for the early diagnosis and treatment of infants and toddlers with ASD including the education of family doctors, pediatricians, and other health professionals.

2019 Resolutions Provincial Council of Women of Ontario (PCWO) Full Text

THE RESOLUTIONS PROCESS

PCWO speaks only on policies approved by the membership through the resolutions process. Each year our Federates, i.e. the Local Councils and the Provincially Organized Societies, research areas of concern to them, such as economics, education, environment, health and safety, housing and land use, justice, mass media and culture, seniors, and status of women. Based on their research findings they prepare resolutions which are then circulated to all PCWO federated organizations for study and input.

Each resolution must include appropriate background material to substantiate the merits of what is proposed. For brevity, the background material is not included in this Brief. The resolutions are then discussed by the delegates from each federate present at the Annual General Meeting (AGM), possibly amended and voted on. Some resolutions are Updates of policies adopted in previous years, and are noted as such. There may also be Emergency Resolutions dealing with issues that require urgent attention. These are brought forward directly to the AGM by an expedited procedure. The grassroots process, following basic democratic principles, produces policies that PCWO can act upon.

The resolutions in this Brief were approved at the 2019 AGM, which was held in Oakville in April, for presentation to the Government of Ontario.

RESOLUTION 2019-01

Improving Conditions of Precarious Employment

- Whereas #1** an increasing number of workers are in precarious employment, poorly paid, insecure, unprotected and unable to support a household; and
- Whereas #2** precarious jobs lack clear progression towards full-time work and job security; and
- Whereas #3** many employers consider temporary workers to be disposable and are less concerned about creating safe workplaces; and
- Whereas #4** the health effects on workers and their families include high levels of stress related tensions and exhaustion due to work-life conflict which can lead to both physical and mental health issues; therefore be it
- Resolved #1** that the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario (PCWO) adopt as policy that there be an end to precarious employment; and be it further
- Resolved #2** that PCWO urge the Government of Ontario to take immediate action to end precarious employment by:
- e) mandating paid sick days, two-week scheduling notice, and parity of benefits, pay and vacation for temporary and contract workers,
 - f) increasing on-the-job training,
 - g) securing as a permanent employee, any term employee who has been in the job for 3 years, and
 - h) monitoring labour laws to ensure that employers are accountable for implementation of Ontario's Employment Standards Act.

PCWO RESOLUTION 2019-02 POLICY UPDATE: Seasonal Agricultural Workers (SAW)

- Whereas #1** in 2001 the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario urged the Government of Ontario to improve agricultural workers' protection under the Labour Relations Act by revoking Bill 7 and reinstating the provisions in law which provide basic protection for farm workers under the Labour Relations Act that are afforded to all other workers in Ontario and protections under the Occupational Health and Safety Act; and
- Whereas #2** in 2010 the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario urged the Government of Ontario to protect all temporary foreign workers (TFW) by improving the efficacy of the TFW program by:
1. Licensing recruiters and employers of TFWs and requiring employers to register with the Ministry of Labour;
 2. Government enforcement of legislated worker rights by increasing the proactive monitoring and regulation enforcement in workplaces so that 10% of all employers of Temporary Foreign Workers receive annual inspections;
 3. Removing obstacles that prevent most agriculture workers from unionizing, and all Live-in Caregivers from unionizing, so that TFWs would enjoy the same rights to collective representation that other workers in Ontario enjoy; and
- Whereas #3** Seasonal Agricultural Workers (SAWs), a subset of Temporary Foreign Workers, do some of the most dangerous and difficult jobs in Ontario, with some of the lowest wages and protections; and
- Whereas #4** SAWs may experience poor standards of housing or are housed in/adjacent to buildings containing chemicals, fertilizers, boilers, industrial fans and heaters; and
- Whereas #5** SAWs often face language barriers in understanding workplace health and safety regulations and health coverage and are not eligible for some settlement and support services; therefore be it
- Resolved #1** that the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario adopt as policy that Seasonal Agricultural Workers (SAWs) be protected, treated fairly and made aware of their rights ; and be it further
- Resolved #2** that the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario urge the Government of Ontario to:
- h) enforce the provisions of the Seasonal Agricultural Workers

Program (SAWP) and the Temporary Foreign Workers Program (TFWP) to ensure that workers in these programs are paid the provincial seasonal average wage rate or better,

- i) revise Employment Standards so that no workers are excluded from protections,
- j) inspect all SAWs housing before, after and randomly throughout the season,
- k) ensure that workplace health and safety information is provided to SAWs in English, French and in their mother tongues,
- l) supply information about Ontario health coverage and how to access it in Canada to SAWs upon arrival,
- m) ensure that all SAWs receive a free medical exam before they return to their home country to confirm that they are free from workplace illness or injury, and
- n) facilitate access to the Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program (OINP) for all “low-skilled” workers by funding settlement and support services.

PCWO RESOLUTION 2019-03 Supervised Opioid Consumption Sites

- Whereas #1** more than 1250 Ontarians died from opioid-related causes in 2017; and
- Whereas #2** supervised consumption sites help reduce rates of HIV, hepatitis C, injection related wounds and infections, and fatal and non-fatal overdoses; and
- Whereas #3** people can also be referred to other health and addiction services; and
- Whereas #4** supervised consumption sites reduce the extent of drug use in public places and the amount of drug-related litter; and
- Whereas #5** studies have shown that supervised consumption sites do not increase drug consumption, drug trafficking or crime in the surrounding environments; therefore be it
- Resolved #1** that the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario (PCWO) adopt as policy that supervised opioid consumption sites are a necessary service; and be it further
- Resolved #2** that PCWO urge the Government of Ontario to:
- d) provide a non-judgemental environment for supervised opioid consumption sites,
 - e) create supervised consumption sites that accommodate assisted injecting and the inhalation of drugs, and
 - f) connect people who use drugs to rehabilitation, and other health and social services.

**PROVINCIAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN OF ONTARIO (PCWO)
LONGSTANDING CONCERNS**

ECONOMICS and SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Economic Rationale for Investments in Women and their Families

PCWO encourages the Government to fund and support sustainable solutions to ongoing issues and maintain funding as needed. Women comprise the highest number of poverty and low income earners. Women suffer to a greater degree when health care budgets are cut, when home care and child care are not affordable or accessible, when social assistance rates are inadequate and when housing is not affordable or accessible. These conditions put women in vulnerable situations where they can more easily become victims of domestic and sexual violence requiring shelter, protection and medical assistance.

Economic Equity

Since its founding in 1923, PCWO has advocated for gender equality and the demand for equal pay was one of the earliest resolutions for PCWO advocacy. Today, gender economic equity is a United Nations and Sustainable Development Goal priority and must be addressed by each province in Canada for this nation to maintain its commitment to these goals. In addition, these goals are imperative for women to reach their full human rights in Canada.

Cost of Poverty

PCWO believes that this Government must invest in the people of Ontario. The cost of poverty is unsustainable when considering health, social, educational and institutional services costs. Every dollar invested in Ontarians to reduce poverty through adequate social assistance, liveable wages, health services for all, affordable housing and support services, brings a high rate of return, not only for families, but for communities and businesses alike.

2019 The Cost of Poverty in Ontario

A recent new report released by Feed Ontario concludes that poverty costs the province between \$27.1 billion and \$33 billion a year. About 1.57 million Ontarians live in poverty, including 382,000 children, based on the Low Income Measure of LIM, after taxes. (By that measure, a single person with an annual income of less than about \$23,500 and a couple or single person with one child living on less than \$33,000 would be considered poor, in 2017.)

The study, entitled The Cost of Poverty in Ontario, examines the relationship between poverty, poor health, the justice system and lost productivity. It also makes the

economic case that “investing in people by reducing poverty is not only socially responsible but financially sound.” ***Total Cost of Poverty in Ontario***

The Justice System	\$1.1 billion
Health Care System	\$3.9 billion
Opportunity / Lost Income	\$19.4 – 25 billion
Taxes foregone	\$2.7 – 3 billion
Total	\$27.1 – 33 billion

In view of such statistics, the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario draws the government’s attention to the plight of Ontarians living in poverty, and reiterates our deep disappointment that Ontario’s social assistance rate increases were scaled back last year.

Social Assistance

It is PCWO’s view, and that of countless front –line service providers, that social assistance rates must provide for basic human needs of adequate food and shelter, transportation, communication and involvement in the community for individuals and families. This is not only a humane societal goal, but one that will, if successful, fulfill the goal of Judge George Thomson’s 1988 Transitions Report to bring people with many skills into the work force, increase productivity, and save on health and other institutional costs.

Adequate Social Assistance rates also help local businesses, landlords, and other public service providers such as municipal public transportation operations . In contrast, the cited recent report from the Ontario Association of Foodbanks shows that at \$33 billion dollars a year, the calculated costs of keeping people in poverty, due to such expenses as lost productivity and increased spending on health care and other services, are greater than the cost to eliminate poverty.

Ontario’s Basic Income Guarantee Pilot

PCWO also again expresses our regret that Ontario’s pilot Basic Income Guarantee (BIG) program was cancelled. We urge the government to rethink this decision, as a new *Canadian Centre for Economic Analysis* confirms the initial benefits of the 1974 to 1978 BIG program in Dauphin, Manitoba, and documents the substantial economic benefits and poverty reduction success of what they classify as a Basic Income Guarantee, Canada’s Child Benefit.

Canada’s Child Benefit has, for instance, raised 588,000 children and 250,000 families out of poverty, has contributed \$46 billion to the Canadian economy, has provided better access to nutritious food, and has improved physical, mental and cognitive health outcomes.

The Basic Guaranteed Income need not replace income programs that are working quite well, such as the forms of basic income that are already available to children (017)

and seniors (65+). PCWO knows that the Ontario Child Benefit has also helped keep many children and their families from falling into poverty, however, such a low social assistance rate largely negates the benefits for many more, and completely fails the rapidly growing number of single persons needing assistance, and families without children.

- **PCWO supports a basic income program as a requirement to reduce and eliminate poverty. Therefore we encourage the government to re-invest in this project and report regular updates on any progress.**

Proposed Changes to Minimum Wage

- **PCWO supported increasing the minimum wage to \$15 in January of 2019 as a necessary part of closing the gender wage gap. With more women working at minimum wage jobs this is a key issue for women living in poverty. We urge the government to reconsider eliminating the planned increase in minimum wage.**

Gender Wage Gap - Universal Child Care for All Ontarians

In 2017, PCWO adopted the final report and the recommendations of the Gender Wage Gap Steering Committee (2016). The report explores ways on how to create more favourable conditions so that women can be part of the labour force and take part more fully in the economic life of Ontario. One of the crucial barriers to greater participation of women in the economy is child care.

- **PCWO agrees that it is time for the Ontario Government to meet the needs of families and provide universal child care at an affordable rate geared to income as they have done in Quebec. We urge the government to fund the immediate development of a universal child care program.**
- **The government should immediately commit to developing an early child care system within a defined timeframe. The system should provide care that is: high quality, affordable, accessible, publicly funded and geared to income, with sufficient spaces to meet the needs of Ontario families.**

Future of Bill 3 The Pay Transparency Act

The Pay Transparency Act (PTA) passed third reading on April 26, 2018, and was to go into effect on January 1, 2019. However shortly after the 2018 provincial election, Premier Doug Ford halted the coming into effect of the *PTA* by enacting Bill 57: the *Restoring Trust, Transparency and Accountability Act, 2018*. This statute, which received Royal Assent on December 6, 2018, delayed the implementation of the *PTA*

to, “a day to be named by proclamation of the Lieutenant Governor”, to allow the government time to engage in public consultations. As of October 10, 2019 the statute had still not been put into effect.

- **Will the Ontario Government put the Pay Transparency Act into effect as a tool to *promote gender equality and equal opportunity in employment and in the workplace*?**

Housing

Recent reports from municipalities across Ontario vividly demonstrate the accelerating housing crisis in Ontario, where both federal and provincial government underinvestment in housing over several years has led to an extremely tight market for affordable rental units, and steeply higher rents. This is drastically impacting those living in poverty, as a growing number of Ontarians are forced to choose between paying the rent and feeding their children. Meager social assistance rates fail to cover the cost of rent and food, and foodbanks are reporting a huge increase in the numbers of clients. There are increasing numbers of people without a home and living on the streets.

- Youth homelessness is a major concern. Research shows that having a stable home environment is the number one predictor of youth success. Children and youth living without a home may be targeted by predators and put into dangerous situations such as drug use and trafficking, sex trade, and human trafficking. These concerns are of provincial importance; what is the Ontario Government’s strategy to address youth homelessness?
- Millennials are being forced to deal with a housing crisis that the older generations never had to face. They are forced to continue to live with their parents or with friends to make ends meet since the cost of living is far above their starting salaries. Will the Ontario Government commit to ensuring these young people have eventually adequate, safe, affordable housing to start their independent lives?
- How will the Ontario Government address the special housing needs of women and children who are forced to leave their homes because of domestic violence?
- Women whose work history is in precarious or part time employment are especially vulnerable in these uncertain global economic times. Will the Ontario Government make housing affordable for them?
- Indigenous communities in Ontario deserve to have housing and clean water infrastructure of high enough quality to ensure healthy living. While Indigenous housing is understood to be under Federal jurisdiction, the terrible living conditions happen to people living in the Province of Ontario. How will the Ontario Government ensure these indigenous life circumstances and conditions improve permanently for those living in our province?

The affordable housing situation in the province must be addressed immediately and significantly at many levels. Many local municipalities are rising to the challenge. For example, some are adopting the 'housing first model, which is proven to be very successful; others are building 'as -of -right' zoning densities into their official plans; and recently, several are calling for immediate drastic action and have joined the National Built For Zero campaign to end chronic homelessness. There are also visionary, economically sound housing plans, proposed by groups such as the Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association, a group with a proven 50 year track record of building excellent affordable housing.

- **In the face of this growing housing emergency, the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario urges the Provincial government to immediately invest substantially in affordable, accessible, appropriate housing and work with all other levels of government, business, the public and service providers to alleviate and then get ahead of the housing crisis.**

ENVIRONMENT

Climate Change

The Provincial Council of Women of Ontario is acutely aware of the world-wide climate change emergency, and for many years, we have advocated for Provincial government actions that would not only be environmentally and economically sound, but help reduce Ontario's carbon footprint.

These included recommendations for substantive investments in:

- alternative forms of green-clean energy such as solar, wind and geothermal, which are predicted by the International Electricity Association to increase by 50% in the next 5 years world-wide,
- along with energy conservation and efficiencies, which have the potential to meet at least 30 percent of our energy needs, and save money that would otherwise be spent on far less environmentally sound energy sources such as nuclear .

PCWO has also strongly supported:

- farm micro-fit programs,
- importation of hydro-electric power from Quebec,
- cap and trade investments in home retrofits,
- soil retention and other proven farming carbon- retention practices.

Recently, our concerns have grown steadily, as the government's plan, *Preserving and Protecting our Environment for the Future Generations*, shows little sign of progress in

reducing carbon emissions, and some actions, such as the emission standard for large industrial users, will increase them . As well, Bill 87 *Fixing the Hydro Mess*, will cut energy efficiency programs for all electricity users and reduce regulatory oversight.

- **PCWO is very concerned that Ontario's Legislative Scientist has been dismissed, and the Independent Environment Commissioner, who was mandated to report on greenhouse gas emissions and energy conservation, has been replaced with government self-reporting through the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks, the later being of course also necessary as a function of sound government operations in the first place, but not as a replacement for an independent monitor.**
- **We note too, that for over 25 years, the Province's Environmental Commissioner, under the Environmental Bill of Rights, monitored and reported on, government action and progress, or lack of same on significant environmental issues such as, loss of forest cover, toxic chemicals, environmental assessments, air pollution, waste management, fracking, wetlands protection, wildlife habitat, wilderness preservation, land use planning, water well regulation, and many others.**

At a local level, the mandate of Ontario Conservation Authorities has been severely narrowed

- to exclude public education programs, and
- the province has cancelled the former Provincial Government's 2008 50 Million Trees Program .

The latter action clearly ignores the very important role trees play in lowering carbon outputs and ameliorating the impacts of climate change, i.e.

- to store carbon,
 - hold the soil,
 - prevent erosion and soil runoff into the Great Lakes,
 - lower the temperature in extreme hot weather,
 - cool streams and
 - help prevent flooding and fires.
- **PCWO urges the Ontario Government to show that its Preserving and Protecting our Environment for the Future Generations Plan is scientifically sound, and will protect the environment, and reduce carbon emissions, so that Ontario can take its place as a climate change carbon-reduction leader.**

NUCLEAR POWER

In contrast to energy conservation and efficiencies and alternative environmentally friendly energy sources, nuclear reactors are hugely expensive to build, operate, decommission and dispose of, are not clean, green, or carbon –free over their life cycle, and should not be considered as an essential component of any long term power plan for Ontario to reduce its carbon emissions. Instead,

- **PCWO urges the government to reduce its reliance on nuclear through a phased shut down and decommissioning of nuclear plants at the end of their life span. There are far too many risks and huge costs, which are growing quickly, as Ontario increasingly becomes a centre of nuclear activity.**

Disposal of Nuclear Waste

PCWO once more warns the Government of Ontario, that as a major nuclear investor in nuclear plant construction, operation, and waste management, it should be extremely concerned about the huge risks of aging of nuclear plants - the oldest of which, Pickering, is very dangerous to the millions of Ontarians living and working nearby; the potential burial of nuclear waste at the Bruce site next to Lake Huron; the disposal of nuclear waste from across the country, and even the USA, at CNL's Chalk River earthquake-prone site; and most recently, the increased efforts of the nuclear industry to promote small nuclear reactors to be sited in remote areas of the province.

Also, it remains of immediate concern to PCWO that extremely dangerous liquid nuclear waste containing Highly Enriched Uranium (HEU) continues to be shipped by truck from Chalk River to South Carolina. It is vital that that the Ontario Office of the Fire Marshall and Emergency Management provide adequate first- responder knowledge and preparedness regarding the real dangers in the event of a fire or a spill into rivers, streams, country side or communities. PCWO emphasises this, as the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission and the Federal government continue to treat this liquid waste using the same regulatory standards as solid nuclear waste, and it is unclear how quickly Chalk River experts, or Ontario special responders could access a potentially disastrous spill, or extremely high- temperature fire accident.

WASTE MANAGEMENT (GENERAL)

PCWO commends the Provincial government for its strong support of producer responsibility and its aim to optimize the blue box program as a part of the solution. PCWO agrees with the Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks, that the public “ believes that every time they put something in the blue box they are reducing litter and waste and improving the environment .”

PCWO's federated member, the St. Catharines and District Council of Women – currently the Niagara District Council of Women - worked in partnership with the Elementary Teachers Federation in Niagara and City of St. Catharines staff to initiate the city's Blue Box program in the mid-1980s and has kept up to date on this issue, some of its members at times sitting on the Region of Niagara's waste advisory committee.

Therefore, although many municipalities are meeting respectable targets, a few having an over 60% diversion rate through innovative methods such as clear bags, many others are struggling.

- **PCWO is cognizant of the importance of the Ontario Government's plans for waste diversion, producer incentives, redesign of products to reduce waste and make them easier to recycle. And**
- **we support reduction of food and organic waste from households and businesses, and of waste going to landfills;**
- **We are also very pleased that incineration of municipal waste is not being considered, since not only are incinerators, such as the one in the municipality of Peel, significant barriers to meeting waste diversion targets, but crucially, their stack gas emissions include CO₂ and such dangerous toxic releases as mercury, dioxins and furans and tiny particles which go deep into the lungs. Incinerator bottom ash is also particularly dangerous and can leach into surrounding soil, so it has to be transported to and stored securely at a special site in the Sarnia area.**
- **PCWO urges the government to move very quickly on this important waste management plan; however, we would ask that there be extensive consultation with the public on setting targets for each stage of the transformation process.**

LAND USE PLANNING

PCWO has policy dating back to 1976 advocating the preservation of prime farmland, especially Niagara's irreplaceable tender fruit lands, where PCWO currently supports their "*permanent*" protection through the government purchase of restrictive covenant/easements from farmers . Therefore,

- **we commend the government for withdrawing Bill 66, which would have allowed development for commercial/industrial uses, and encouraged subsequent residential sprawl even within some areas of the Greenbelt, such as Niagara.**

Nevertheless, other prime farmlands, including those in the Oak Ridges Moraine area, which has been frozen from urban boundary expansions for the past 14 years, remain under threat of development when their official plans go through a mandatory 5 year comprehensive review.

- PCWO is also concerned with the recent major Growth Plan change affecting mainly the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) to allow 'Small Area' exemptions to farmland preservation, where developers who are turned down when applying for developments on less than 40 hectares can now appeal to the Local Planning Appeals Tribunal (LPAT). In the past, municipalities have been very reluctant to turn down applications, due to the costs of appeals to LPAT's precursor the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB).
- **It is to be hoped that the Ontario Government will rethink the *Small Area* exemptions and with the current review of the Provincial Policy Statement it will not be expanded province-wide.**

STATUS OF WOMEN, HEALTH & SAFETY, SENIOR AFFAIRS

Since the changes in governance and leadership in Ontario since 2018, there have been a number of critical decisions made related to public structures, policies and services that have a significant impact on multiple issues that directly affect women across Ontario.

Government of Ontario's Response to the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women & Girls:

In June, 2019 the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls was released. The Final Report outlined that persistent and deliberate human and Indigenous rights violations and abuses are the root cause behind Canada's staggering rates of violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA people. The two volume report called for transformative legal and social changes to resolve the crisis that has devastated Indigenous communities across the country.

Given the large Indigenous population in Ontario, the PCWO strongly agrees that the Government of Ontario must prioritize, as a matter of reconciliation and gender equity, *The National Inquiry's Calls for Justice* that pertain to provincial jurisdiction, presented as legal imperatives rather than optional recommendations, and focused on the areas of **health, security, justice** and **culture** including:

- Supporting the development and implementing a National Action Plan to ensure equitable access to employment, housing, education, safety, and health care
- Providing long-term funding for education programs and awareness campaigns related to violence prevention and combatting lateral violence in Ontario

- Changing the child welfare system to ensure the prohibition of the apprehension of children on the basis of poverty and cultural bias.
- **While indigenous matters often get lost in the deep cracks of federal – provincial jurisdictions, how will the Government of Ontario ensure the major recommendation of the Final Report of the Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls are also implemented in Ontario?**

Violence Against Women: Workplace Harassment, Assault and Abuse

Each day, women and girls in Canada are sexually assaulted and/or abused. There are persistently high rates of women experiencing domestic violence, sexual harassment, and campus and workplace violence and harassment of a sexual, mental and psychological nature. What is the Ontario Government strategy to address these issues?

The Councils of Women have worked in many cities and towns of Ontario for more than 100 years to have female police officers placed on the municipal police forces, and our (great-) grandmothers demonstrated when policewomen were declared not necessary by municipal boards and administrations.

We are now concerned about our female police officers' workplace safety. Sexual harassment is still a dominant issue within police services in Ontario and Canada today. The psychological torment from these actions causes hopelessness, low self-worth, depression, and the loss of interest in personal and professional life, even taking their own lives to end their suffering. These symptoms not only affect the health of our female officers, but their family members and the community.

Currently sexual harassment investigations are only conducted internally within the suspect services with little to no penalties for the suspect officers. The victim officers and witness officers are left to deal with ostracizing and shunning by other officers merely as a result of exercising their integrity. To the public and to the affected female officers, there seems to be little accountability for the police services and the suspect/accused officers.

Owing to its history, PCWO sees it as a high priority to protect our female officers and their families from harassment and undue hardship from the effects suffered through this process. Police women are important assets to police departments as they can offer skills in interpersonal communication, conflict-resolution, and problem-solving, and more. To pave the road for more skilled women to apply to police services, we must protect the ones that are currently working in the field.

- **What measures has the Ontario Government implemented or will implement to ensure that cases of police and other government workplace sexual harassment**

are appropriately investigated and followed up in a timely, dignified, and respectful manner?

Expert Panel on Violence Against Women

PCWO reiterates again that it is still disappointed in the 2018 decision of the new Ontario Government to cancel the expert panel to end violence against women – the Roundtable on Violence Against Women that was established in 2015 to provide strategic advice on government policies. This diverse group, made up of representatives from many organizations that work on the frontlines of women’s rights and women’s safety, was instrumental to the province in providing advice on key issues that impact women in Ontario.

This is especially alarming given that 50% of all femicides (in which women are the victims of murder) in Canada annually, occur in Ontario.

- Between November 25, 2019 and November 25, 2018 there were 48 cases of femicide in Ontario. (Canadian Femicide Observatory for Justice & Accountability, 2019).
- Many victims remain unnamed since many police forces don’t report names of some homicide victims or victims of murder-suicides, which are frequently “domestic” in nature; one-third of the 445 homicides reviewed by the Ontario Domestic Violence Death Review Committee between 2003 and 2017 were murder-suicides (MacLeans, September 17, 2019).

Cuts to Rape Sexual Assault Centres

- In Ontario, this decision is compounded by the fact that to date, the government has made the decision to only partially fulfil the funding increases to the provinces rape crisis centres that were committed to under the previous government. These Centres were supposed to receive a 33% increase under the previous government’s strategy to end gender based violence, \$14.8 million over 3 years. Announced in February 2019, these critical organizations found out they will receive only a portion of this – a quarter of the promised funding. Instead of receiving \$4M this fiscal year, they will receive only \$1M, to be spread out over 42 centres across Ontario. It is important to note that most of these centres have not received funding increases to support the growing need for rape crisis services for several years.
- Additionally, funding for sexual assault centres and women's shelters is distributed on a per capita basis in Ontario, which puts women in sparsely populated areas at an even greater disadvantage (CBC, January 20, 2019).
- Alarming, these cuts may impact Ontarian Indigenous women disproportionately as their home communities are often rurally located and have fewer resources to support women who are abused or experiencing violence. This is critical as Indigenous women are 12 times more likely to be murdered or missing than other women in Canada, and

16 times more likely than white women, states the interim report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (2019).

- In addition to this funding decision, further decisions by the government to make alcohol far more accessible in the province are alarming. There is a clear and well established link between the abuse of alcohol and rates of sexual and other violence against women across Canada. In the 2019/20 fiscal year budget announced earlier in April, the government made many changes to how, when and where alcohol can be purchased in the province. Making alcohol easier to access through expanded locations and hours of liquor sales, as well as reducing barriers to drinking alcohol in public spaces means that women are far more likely to be victims of sexual abuse in Ontario.
- **Will the Ontario Government consider making up for the shortfall in funding this fiscal year to the Province's 42 rape crisis centres?**
- **Is the Ontario Government considering alternate ways to provide help for raped women, girls (and boys)?**

Ministry of the Status of Women:

For more than 125 years, at the core of the PCWO and before at the core of the Ontario Provincial Committee of the National Council of Women, has been the belief in and advocacy for gender equality . Women in Ontario represent over 50% of the population and play a critical role in the economic and social success of this province. They also experience violence, abuse, poverty, physical and economic insecurity in highly disproportionate numbers, and experience, than men in Ontario. PCWO is very concerned that the new stand alone Ontario Ministry for the Status of Women that was sought by the many women's groups across Ontario has been eliminated in favour of having one MPP take responsibility for 'Women's Issues'. Assigning this important Office to a Minister with multiple priorities has given the impression that issues impacting women specifically would not get the attention or focus required. By reducing the Ministry of the Status of Women to a non-portfolio responsibility and unnecessarily changing the name to 'women's issues' the Ontario Government sent a message to Ontarians and to Canada that advancing women's and gender based equality is no longer a priority for our province .

- **We do note the appointment of the Honorable Jill Dunlop, Minister without Portfolio, Associate Minister of Children and Women's Issues . PCWO congratulates the Minister on her appointment.**
- **It is our hope that the Hon. Jill Dunlop's Ministry jurisdiction will be focused on gaining legal and economic equality for Ontario women in all their diversity. And on eliminating gender based violence. We look to the Ontario Government to fund and empower the Minister so that her ministry will be able to pursue the**

collaboration across the government to ensure a gender perspective and a gender analysis lens be brought to bear on all government policy making.

Gender – Based Analysis in all Ministries

PCWO agrees with the Gender Wage Gap Steering Committee recommendation and that Gender-based analysis (GBA) is a key process in establishing women's equality in the economic, social and civic life. We urge the Ontario Government to initiate early in its mandate an adequately funded development of a gender -based analysis of all its policies, programs and services and provide funding for all ministries to implement the analysis.

Health System Changes:

In February 2019 the government announced plans for sweeping changes to the health care system in Ontario, including the creation of a centralized health decision making agency (Ontario Health Agency) which would take the place of multiple provincial agencies such as Trillium Gift of Life, Cancer Care Ontario, Health Quality Ontario, Health Shared Services Ontario and the Province's 14 Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs), which have oversight for planning and the operational delivery of home care services across the province.

Further to this, the government announced that health care services across the province will be reorganized around 30 – 50 "Ontario Health Teams". At maturity, each Ontarian will be connected to one of these health teams to receive their health care services. The legislation that will allow this to happen is Bill C-74 and it formally passed third reading on April 19, 2019. This is a massive system level change for a province of over 14 million people.

PCWO is concerned that there are currently still very few details

- on how these teams will work or function;
- on how they might impact local services;
- how geographical differences and unique needs will be considered in the design of health care;
- or how our care overall will be impacted.

As a part of the organization that founded the Victorian Order of Nurses, for PCWO one of the concerns that must be considered is the change in the delivery of home and community based care within this new structure.

Currently overseen by the LHINs, home and community based care is a growing sector within health care due to the increasing demands. Given the large level of privatization in this sector now (home care service delivery in Ontario is contracted out through hundreds of private for-profit and not-for-profit organizations)

- we fear that there is a very strong possibility that these changes in health care will promote even further privatization of home care and the removal of the public

accountability and oversight functions that the LHIN now holds to ensure that home care services are safe, equitable and accessible across the province.

The Provincial Council of Women of Ontario (PCWO) has, historically communicated its policies concerning Long Term Care Homes (LTC), to subsequent Ontario Governments including: 76.10 - Inspection of Nursing Homes; 83.6 - Homes For the Aged; 93.4 - Beds For Long Term Care (LTC); 03.03 - Staffing Levels for LTC Homes; 01.04U - Regulation of LTC Homes; 08.2U - Standards of Care in LTC Homes; and others.

While there are too few details to comment on the newly created system of long-term care, PCWO knows that as women are disproportionately represented in care giving roles, both formally and informally, these changes could have significant impacts on the women needing care for their loved ones.

- Women are often pulled from the workplace to care for aging and dependent parents (or children with complex, chronic illnesses). A less stable and equitable home care system means that even more burden will be placed on women to replace formal caregivers and make up for the gaps in care to loved ones.
- This places women at a significant economic disadvantage. It also places undue stress on women, disproportionately, to replace valued public services. There is evidence to indicate that such stress, combined with decreased economic power and a decreased capacity to participate in social and civic decision making, have negative implications for women's mental and physical health.

Another significant issue related to health system changes relate specifically to the growing instability of the home care and long term care workforces in Ontario.

- Most homecare and care in long term care facilities is provided through Personal Support Workers (PSWs) who are unregulated workers, often with the most physically challenging, precarious and lowest paid roles in the system.
- PSWs are the backbone of the home & long term care system in this province and deliver the majority of care to home care patients and long term care residents.
- It is estimated that there were 90,000 PSWs in Ontario in 2011. However, it should alarm every politician that the number of PSWs leaving their positions annually is higher than the number graduating each year.
- In Ontario it is estimated that 7500 PSWs graduate from various programs each year; however about 9000 are leaving the workforce annually – a net loss of approximately 1500 PSWs (AdvantAge Ontario 2020 Provincial Budget Submission, October 2019).
- According to a recent HealthForceOntario survey (2018), over 50% of PSWs in Ontario are retained for fewer than five years; 43% reported burn out as the reason they left health care and 62% of those who are currently working would leave due to stress / burnout.

- These are very scary statistics and speak to the need for a fulsome and coordinated government driven health human resources strategy for both the home care and long term care sectors in this province.
- Health system change that drives privatization means that tens of thousands of women working in this industry in Ontario will be subjected to even less job stability and more demanding hours and conditions of work as organizations are required to deliver results on decreasing margins of profit.
- As has been identified by multiple media outlets across the province, there is already a critical shortage of PSWs in our home care and long term care systems due to the aforementioned conditions; this will only get worse under a more fully privatized approach to home care.
- The result will be that women will increasingly be expected to take on more caregiving roles for older / sick loved ones and
- that women who remain in the workplace as PSWs will have even worse working conditions and will continue to be unfairly compensated.
- In fact, the risk to the entire health care system due to these changes and potential risks cannot be understated given the rapidly changing demographics in Ontario.
- **The PCWO strongly urges the Ontario Government to put in place measures to ensure an adequate, appropriate and well supported PSW workforce for citizens and also to ensure that publicly funded AND publicly provided home care services is increased as opposed to decreased in these health system changes inherent in Bill C-74 in order to ensure Ontario women are not disproportionately impacted.**

SENIOR AFFAIRS

Over the years, PCWO has made and repeated many times, recommendations regarding the safety, security and wellbeing of residents and the level and quality of care in Long – Term Care (LTCH) and Seniors Care Homes to previous Ontario Governments and recently to the current Government of Ontario, i.e., Nursing Homes Inspection (1976) ; beds for Long-term Care (1993) Adequate supply of Long-Term Care Places; a need to improve the standards of care in LTC facilities (2008); on Staffing Levels and Practices in LTC facilities (2003); (These PCWO policies can be found on the PCWO website)

Ontario seniors, regardless of their socio-economic status, are very worried about their future care and wellbeing in LTCH. The Elizabeth Wettlaufer murder cases and other media publicised cases of elder abuse in retirement and long-term care homes have shaken the public trust in our Ontario Long-term Care Homes and retirement homes system. Seniors have many questions about how our provincial system is going to protect them. Which strategies are under way to prevent similar crimes in the future?

With the release, in July 2019, of the final Report and the recommendations of the

Public Inquiry into the Safety and Security of Residents in the Long- Term Care Homes System, some reassurance was given with the determination of the elements that work well in the system, but on the other hand also great concern with the many examples of systematic failure in our LTCH and seniors homes system that need changes and corrections and money.

- **PCWO expects that the Ontario government will do its utmost to reestablish the trust of Ontarians in the safety and security of LTCH and retirement residences and that the Ontario Government will implement the recommendations of the inquiry and monitor and enforce existing regulations and make provisions for new rules, regulations and measures to protect residents from intentional harm.**

We understand that at present more senior residents need higher levels of care than in the past, and that this puts higher demands and pressure on the LTCH and retirement homes and stretches their resources almost beyond capacity. No doubt, there will be more staffing and new funding needed and a continuous search for new ways to improve the quality of care and to improve the quality of life for Ontario residents of LTCH and retirement homes. We question, however, whether Ontario will have the skilled human resources available to be up to the task.

- **PCWO commends the Retirement Homes Regulatory Authority (RHRA) on the launch of an updated new approach to routine home inspections as of July 4th 2019.**

This modernized approach will focus on areas of greatest risk of harm to retirement homes residents, meaning inspectors will spend more time observing daily life in homes and brief interactions with staff and residents and less times reviewing policies.

Education

The Provincial Council of Women of Ontario (PCWO) was pleased to learn through a very thoughtful **article in the Ottawa Citizen by the Hon. Stephen Lecce, Minister of Education; the Hon. Monte McNaughton, Minister of Labour; and the Hon. Jill Dunlop, Associate Minister of Children and Women's issues**, that the Ontario Government plans to "put the spotlight on high-tech and skilled trades", in order to combat youth unemployment and future skilled labour force shortages with investments in apprenticeship and STEM programs, thus creating a talent and labour pool of young men and women with training in skilled trades and technology skills for the needs of the economy now and in the future, with opportunities for better paying jobs and careers. The Ontario Government will do well by taking as points of reference the German apprenticeship model(s), that have proven themselves during the last 70 years. (Perhaps not only the State of Schleswig-Holstein, but also Baden- Württemberg and Bavaria.)

As the policies cited below indicate, PCWO has advocated with Ontario Governments over the span of more than 30 years for apprenticeship programs within “a flexible and adaptive education system that works for all students. “

PCWO commends the Ontario Government for embarking on a renewed effort of creating a successful apprenticeship and technological skills training system for a diversity of young Ontarians, including indigenous. PCWO will follow its progress.

(1979) 1. Apprenticeship Programs

- a) to provide apprenticeship programs without (or with a minimum of) theory and classroom requirements
- b) with special emphasis on the "see and do" training approach and
- c) on job appraisals by Ministry of Labour Licensing personnel of skilled tradesman designated by the Ministry.

(1979) 2. Apprenticeship Programs

- a) to attract young people into apprenticeship programs early in secondary school, by integrated systems of creating career awareness, counselling and with the stress on the dignity and value of skilled trades
- b) to work with Labour, Industry and Education institutions to prepare adequate numbers to meet present and anticipated needs for skilled workers.

(1983) Employment Training: Female Students and New Technology

- a) to implement programs of affirmative action in education and technological employment and
- b) to require Guidance Counsellors to direct female students' attention to a wide range of opportunities in technical and technological fields

(1991)16 Worker Training in Ontario

- a) to rapidly organize a system of Training and Adjustment boards to be responsible for on-the-job skills training in Ontario.

(1996) Preventing Social Assistance Dependency

- b) design measures which help people avoid reliance on social assistance, i.e., more practical training for teenagers, encouragement to complete school using co-op education programs.

(2003)02-U TECHNICAL TRAINING FOR YOUTH

- c) some hands-on technical experience for students beginning in Grade 5 and gradually increasing in content during subsequent grades so students will have an opportunity to consider future studies and/or employment in fields other than that requiring a university degree or post-secondary diploma

- d) a classroom technical training program, including an on-the-job apprenticeship program, beginning in Grade 7 or Grade 9, according to the academic requirements for a particular trade or skill. The Program, in some cases, may allow the students to earn some remuneration for their efforts.

Indigenous Studies in Ontario Schools

The Provincial Council of Women of Women has advocated with previous Ontario Governments to make Native Studies mandatory in all elementary and secondary schools:

(1996)6 Native Studies in Ontario Schools

- a) Make this a mandatory component of social studies and history curricula in all elementary and secondary schools
- b) cooperate with province's aboriginal organizations to develop study materials reflecting native history and culture for use in Ontario schools

PCWO commends the Ontario Government on providing a Grades 9-12 revised First Nations, Métis and Inuit Curriculum for the beginning of the 2019 /20 school year. PCWO wants to urge the Ontario Government to make the education about “indigenous perspectives, contributions and histories” mandatory in all elementary and secondary schools.

Mandatory Food and Nutrition Education

Nearly one-third of children and youth in Canada are overweight or obese – conditions that can result in increased risk of chronic disease such as Type II diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

While in 2012, the Ontario Government set a goal to reduce childhood obesity by 20% over five years, there are gaps and deficits in Canadians’ and Ontarians’ knowledge and skills related to food and nutrition. Seven of the twenty new and revised Family Studies courses released by the Ontario Ministry of Education in 2013 are food and nutrition related, but none are mandatory.

- **We urge the Ontario Government to make at least one Food and Nutrition course mandatory for all students in order to receive an Ontario Secondary School Diploma, and**
- **Make food and nutrition education a focus in all grades.**

Sex-Education

In its 2018 Brief PCWO urged the Ontario Government to establish swiftly an up-dated sex- education curriculum that addresses today’s information and guidance needs of

the greatest number of students at all levels and their parents, and that also finds acceptable options for the parents who do not want their children to be part of the mainstream approach.

PCWO commends the Ontario Government for finding a compromise for an appropriate Sex Education Curriculum that provides most students with the tools to recognize when they are being exploited, assaulted, bullied and enticed into unwanted actions upon their person and body. A factual, truthful education enables our children and young people to make sound decisions for a physically and mentally healthy life.

2012. AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER (ASD): EARLY DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT

Whereas #1 research shows that early diagnosis is critical in achieving the best possible results in treating autism because intervention needs to begin while the child's brain is still pliable and the pathways are still open, ideally at the infant stage and definitely before the school years begin and

Whereas #2 waiting times in Ontario for an assessment and diagnosis are one to two years followed by a minimum two year wait for Intensive Behaviour Intervention (IBI) therapy which is government-funded; and

Whereas #3 the number of school-aged children with Autism Spectrum Disorder is increasing and school boards across Ontario are struggling to meet their needs for special programs and personal teaching assistants; and

Whereas #4 parents are losing their homes and grandparents are forced to delay retirement in order to help pay for private treatment for their children; and

Whereas #5 the delay in early diagnosis and treatment results in increased costs in education programs that are started too late and extra medical expenses for families; therefore be it

Resolved#1 that the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario (PCWO) adopt as Policy support for immediate assessment and early intervention treatment of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD); and

Resolved #2 that the PCWO urge the Government of Ontario to fund early diagnosis Autism Spectrum Disorder by assessing all infants and toddlers who display significant developmental delay or regression; and be it further

Resolved #3 that PCWO urge the Government of Ontario to immediately Implement programs for the early diagnosis and treatment of infants and toddlers with ASD including the education of family doctors, pediatricians, and other health professionals.

2019 NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN RESOLUTIONS WITH PROVINCIAL IMPLICATIONS

CONSUMER CHARTER FOR SENIORS (NCWC)

Whereas #1 our Federal public institutions and companies under Federal jurisdiction offer lasting value for elderly consumers when they offer accessible customer support as a written and publicized policy that is promoted; and

Whereas #2 direct customer support needs to be offered to vulnerable consumers who are elderly and have no means or ability to use technology (tablets, computers, cell phones); and

Whereas #3 penalty fees are currently applied to those seniors who are unable or who are apprehensive to make an online purchase; and

Whereas #4 the independent financial ombudsman in Canada, the Ombudsman for Banking Services and Investment (OBSI), does not currently have the power to implement decisions following unethical business practices, nor for the high-pitch sales of services by banks, financial institutions and financial advisors; and

Whereas #5 good corporate citizenry should provide the conditions and terms of a contract in simple language, with direct access to a customer service representative, and with criteria for refunds or cancellation; and

Whereas #6 similar to the federal government's "gender policy analysis", there is a need to adopt a "senior's policy analysis" for all federal government departments and agencies that will ensure the prevention of challenges for seniors as consumers: therefore, be it resolved that

Resolved #1 that the National Council of Women of Canada (NCWC) adopt as policy there be a Consumer Charter for Seniors; and be it further

Resolved #2 that the NCWC urge the Government of Canada to establish and implement a Consumer Charter for Seniors after consulting widely with seniors across Canada; and be it further

Resolved #3 that the NCWC urge Local and Provincial Councils of Women to consult with their respective government representatives to establish and implement a Consumer Charter for Seniors.

NATIONAL SCHOOL FOOD PROGRAM (NCWC)

Whereas #1 UNICEF reports in 2017 that Canada ranks 37 out of 41 countries for food security and nutrition; and

Whereas #2 when children go to school hungry, their energy levels, memory, problemsolving skills, creativity, concentration and behaviour are negatively impacted; and

Whereas #3 many Canadian children are not eating enough of the right kinds of foods leading to an increase in the rate of chronic diseases; and

Whereas #4 current school food programs reach only a small percentage of students; and

Whereas #5 several provinces have guidelines for school nutrition, and municipalities may vary in what kinds of food are available; therefore be it

Resolved #1 that the National Council of Women of Canada adopt as policy that there be a national school food program providing breakfast and lunch in both elementary and secondary schools; and be it further

Resolved #2 that the National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada, working with the provinces and territories, to institute and fund a national school food program providing breakfast and lunch for both elementary and secondary schools; and be it further

Resolved #3 that the NCWC urge the Government of Canada to ensure that this program:

- a) teaches children about nutrition and health
- b) prepares food using sanitary food handling practices
- c) respectfully accommodates health sensitivities – with reference to food allergies, medical conditions and cultural/religious restrictions.

BAN SINGLE USE PLASTIC PRODUCTS (NCWC)

Whereas #1 the European Parliament voted in favour of a ban on single-use plastic products in the EU market; and further be it

Whereas #2 plastic waste is choking our oceans, threatening to outweigh the amount of fish by 2050 if nothing is done; and

Whereas #3 recent studies show microplastics are in our bodies and it's only a matter of time before we discover resulting health impacts; and

Whereas #4 Canada generates about 3.25 million tons of plastic waste every year, 1.6 million coffee cups sit in Canada's landfills and Canadians throw out about 57million plastic straws a year; therefore be it

Resolved #1 that the National Council of Women of Canada (NCWC) adopt as policy that single-use plastic products be banned, and be it further

Resolved #2 that the NCWC urge the Government of Canada to take immediate action to:

- a. Ban single use plastic products in Canada by 2021
- a. Provide leadership on the phasing out of single-use plastics
- b. Put the burden on manufacturers to replace single-use plastic products with readily available alternatives of environmentally sustainable materials.
- c. Reduce plastics where no alternatives are available by at least 35% by 2021.

Resolved #3 that NCWC urge the Councils to urge their respective governments to:

- a. Ban single use plastic products in their province by 2021
- a. Provide leadership on the phasing out of single-use plastics
- b. Put the burden on manufacturers to replace single-use plastic products with readily available alternatives of environmentally sustainable materials
- c. Reduce plastic where no alternatives are available by at least 35% by 2021

SEASONAL AGRICULTURAL WORKERS (NCWC)

Whereas #1 Seasonal Agricultural Workers (SAWs) do some of the most dangerous and difficult jobs in Canada, with some of the lowest wages and protections; and

Whereas #2 SAWs may experience poor standards of housing or are housed in/adjacent to buildings containing chemicals, fertilizers, boilers, industrial fans and heaters; and

Whereas #3 SAWs are subject to medical repatriation and are sent home when sick or injured; and

Whereas #4 SAWs often face language barriers in understanding workplace health and safety regulations and health coverage and are not eligible for some settlement and support services; and

- Whereas #5** SAWs have taxes and Employment Insurance premiums deducted from their pay without access to the insurance benefits or the rights associated with citizenship; therefore be it
- Resolved #1** that the National Council of Women of Canada (NCWC) adopt as policy that Seasonal Agricultural Workers be protected and treated fairly and be informed of their rights and obligations; and be it further
- Resolved #2** that the NCWC urge the Government of Canada and provincial councils urge their respective governments to take immediate action to:
- a) enforce the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program (SAWP) and the Temporary Foreign Workers Program (TFWP) to ensure that workers in these programs are paid the provincial seasonal average wage rate or better; and
 - b) inspect all SAWs housing before, after and randomly throughout the season; and
 - c) allow SAWs labour mobility to leave exploitative work situations; grant open work permits to workers whose employer is suspended; and implement an anti-reprisal mechanism to ensure employers don't unjustly repatriate workers (for example for complaining or due to injury or illness); and
 - d) ensure that workplace health and safety information is provided to SAWs in their own languages; and
 - e) ensure that SAWs have full access to the Employment Insurance program and special benefits (parental, maternal and compassionate benefits); and
 - f) facilitate a pathway for SAWs to permanent residence in every province under the provincial nominee programs by eliminating barriers to migrant workers' access to Provincial Nominees Programs and by reducing or eliminating language requirements; and
 - g) extend eligibility for settlement services to migrant workers and ensure that services such as translations and language instructions are adapted to the needs of these workers; and
 - h) ensure that all SAWs receive a free medical exam before they return to their home country to confirm that they are healthy and free from workplace illness or injury; and
 - i) commit to protecting migrant worker rights by signing the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families.

(NCWC) UPDATE: ADVERTISING OF ALCOHOL AND NEED FOR CONTINUED EDUCATIONAL CAMPAIGN

Whereas #1 in 1974 National Council of Women NCWC asked the Government of

Canada to prohibit advertising for Alcohol and Tobacco and, in 1976 NCWC asked the Government of Canada to launch an educational campaign on the dangers of tobacco and alcohol; and

Whereas #2 Federal, Provincial, Territorial and Municipal governments have managed to reduce consumption of tobacco through a suite of policies, educational measures and regulations; and

Whereas #3 Health Canada officials have warned of the considerable increase in the number of women drinking heavily and the wide range of harms, such as babies born with foetal alcohol spectrum disorder, and other social and health issues; and

Whereas #4 Health Canada 's 2018 Report: State of Canada's Health, warned of the continued high rates of problematic alcohol consumption among youth, with data showing 25% of youth in grades 7 to 12 use alcohol excessively; and

Whereas #5 the tobacco industry has a number of restrictions on the promotion of its product, however the alcohol industry continues to heavily advertise an enjoyable, stress-free drinking lifestyle through marketing tools such as social media, magazine ads, internet sales; therefore be it

Resolved #1 that the NCWC adopt as policy that there be a strong suite of federal government policies, regulations and educational measures regarding the promotional marketing of alcohol, and the dangers of alcohol consumption, particularly for women of child bearing age, and youth; and be it further

Resolved #2 that the National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to:

- a) strengthen its policies and regulations regarding marketing of alcohol in all its forms
- b) initiate an intensive educational campaign regarding the dangers of alcohol consumption, particularly for women of child bearing age and youth; and work with the Provinces and Territories to develop similar regulations regarding the promotion and sale of alcohol and educational campaigns regarding the dangers of alcohol consumption, particularly for women of child bearing age and youth.

EMERGING ISSUE: CLIMATE CHANGE RESPONSE (NCWC)

Whereas #1 the National Council of Women of Canada (NCWC) has adopted policy protecting Canadians from changes in our environment, for example, air pollution from industry and transportation, water pollution from waste, nuclear energy production,

fracking, agricultural run-off, antibiotics, other medications and food additives, and land pollution from industry and mining, fossil fuel drilling; and

Whereas #2 changing average rainfall and its annual distribution, and extreme weather episodes have contributed to food insecurity; and

Whereas #3 insects which were once kept in check in Canada by cold winters are now surviving and spreading, ex. spruce bud worm, leading to flammable dead trees and forest fires threatening and destroying habitation of people and animals and causing massive release of carbon particles, carbon dioxide, and other volatile gases from burning wood and resin, compounds which accelerate warming; and

Whereas #4 rural and Indigenous people are affected by changing animal habitats, loss of natural habitat, loss of pollinating bees, new permafrost conditions and retreating sea ice; and

Whereas #5 from the publication of Limits to Growth in 1972, the regular reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the international conferences on the environment such as Rio de Janeiro in 1992, through Kyoto 1997, Copenhagen 2009, Durban 2011, Paris 2015, Poland 2018, we have been warned of an impending crisis; and

Whereas #6 Canada is not on track to meet its Paris targets, and it is now widely acknowledged by experts that climate change is proceeding rapidly, and that this is having serious effects on the global environment, and on communities and individuals; therefore be it

Resolved #1 that the National Council of Women of Canada (NCWC) adopt policy to recognize that our climate is changing and that measures need to be taken quickly to mitigate the effects on Canadians now and in the future; and be it further

Resolved #2 to urge the Government of Canada to respond to the crisis and communicate its plan to meet the agreed upon targets which should mitigate the effects of climate change globally, and legislate those actions in Canada; and be it further

Resolved #3 to urge our federates and provincial and local councils to urge their respective governments to take appropriate actions, and to communicate with their members to educate the membership about the effects of climate change so that as many Canadians as possible will adopt practices that reduce each individual's impact on the environment.

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