

**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 DALTON MCGUINTY, PREMIER**

**Milica Kovacevich, President**

**Marianne Wilkinson, Vice President Resolutions**

**The Hon. James K. Bartleman  
Lieutenant Governor of Ontario  
Honourary President, Provincial Council of Women of Ontario**

**November 2005**

# THE PROVINCIAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN OF ONTARIO

## BRIEF TO THE GOVERNMENT OF ONTARIO 2005

### CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
<b>PROFILE OF PCWO</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>PREAMBLE</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2005 PCWO RESOLUTIONS</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>1. FULL-TIME NURSING POSITIONS</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>2. HEALTH PREMIUM TAX</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>3. DELISITING OF HEALTH SERVICES:         CHIROPRACTICS, OPTOMETRY AND         PHYSIOTHERAPY</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>4. THE CANADA LEARNING BOND AND         REGISTERED EDUCATION SAVINGS PLAN</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>5. LANDFILLS</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>6. SUPPORT FOR EXTENDED FAMILIES</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>POLICY UPDATES</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>1. DEPOSIT-RETURN SYSTEM FOR BEVERAGE         CONTAINERS</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>2. GAMBLING</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>EMERGENCY RESOLUTIONS</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>1. INSULIN PUMPS FOR DIABETICS</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>EMERGING AND ONGOING ISSUES</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>PCWO BOARD OF DIRECTORS</b>	<b>32</b>

## **BRIEF TO THE GOVERNMENT OF ONTARIO – 2005**

### **PROFILE OF COUNCIL**

The Provincial Council of Women of Ontario (PCWO) was founded in 1923 as an affiliate of the National Council of Women of Canada, which was founded in 1893, and the International Council of Women established in 1888.

#### **PCWO's Affiliated Members:**

##### **Local Councils**

Ottawa, Toronto, Hamilton, London, Windsor, and St. Catharines;

##### **Provincially Organized Societies**

Association of Early Childhood Educators – Ontario

Business and Professional Women's Clubs of Ontario

Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario

Older Women's Network Ontario Inc.

Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association

Ontario Home Economics Association

Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation

Ontario Women's Liberal Commission

Polish Alliance Ladies Circle

Polish Canadian Women's Federation

Salvation Army

Ukrainian Women's Association of Canada

## **PREAMBLE**

The Provincial Council of Women of Ontario (PCWO) is pleased to present its 2005 Annual Brief to the Government of Ontario and looks forward to hearing of the actions planned by the Premier and appropriate Government Ministries to address our concerns.

This is the 82<sup>nd</sup> Brief presented to the Government of Ontario. Over the past decades the PCWO has been a leader in bringing to the Government's attention, matters of concern to many Ontarians.

Established in 1923, as an affiliate of the National Council of Women (established in 1893) the aim of the Council is to work for the betterment of conditions pertaining to family, community and society.

PCWO is composed of 6 Local Councils and 12 Provincially Organized Societies. Each year these organizations research areas of concern such as: health, safety, education, environment, land-use, justice and seniors issues, to name a few, and their proposed resolutions are circulated to all of our affiliates for study and input. Resolutions are then presented to the delegates from each affiliate at the AGM, possibly amended and then voted on. This grass roots process, following basic democratic principles, produces policies to present to the appropriate government ministry.

This year PCWO will be available on Monday, November 21 9:00 am to 4:00 pm and Tuesday, November 22 from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm in Room 230 of the Legislative Building to present our Brief to the Government and our members. We look forward to a dialogue with the appropriate Ministers or their representatives on the content of the resolutions, which are presented in full in this Brief. We also look forward to the responses of all political parties.

These resolutions were approved by our membership for submission to the Government of Ontario. To assist in the review, each resolution has been placed on a separate page. In addition to the resolutions, PCWO has included comments on emerging and current issues we wish to bring to the Government's attention.

## **2005 RESOLUTIONS**

### **RESOLUTIONS**

Proposed resolutions are drafted by the local councils and/or affiliates and are submitted to the PCWO Resolutions Vice President. All proposed resolutions must include appropriate background material to substantiate the merits of the proposed resolutions. The whereas clauses must reflect the background material and the first resolve clause addresses provincial council of women policy and the second resolve clause is direction to the government. **PCWO may only speak on an issue if it has policy.**

After a review by the VP Resolutions the proposed resolutions are circulated to the membership, from across the province, for discussion. The membership reviews the draft resolutions and votes on their acceptance or rejection; and/or to submit amendments. The results of the local review process are forwarded back to the VP Resolutions. The proposed resolutions and amendments are once again forwarded to the membership for final debate at the AGM.

The resolutions in this Annual Brief were passed at the **82<sup>nd</sup> Annual General Meeting** of Provincial Council of Women of Ontario in May 2005, in Ottawa, Ontario. They represent the thinking of a wide variety of Ontarians.

### **POLICY UPDATES 2005**

Policy Updates are revisions of previously approved policies that have been reviewed and updated.

### **EMERGENCY RESOLUTIONS**

Emergency Resolutions are presented at the Annual General Meeting and are voted for acceptance as emerging issues that require action prior to the next Annual General Meeting.

**RESOLUTION 2005.1****FULL-TIME NURSING POSITIONS**

**#1 Whereas,** in 2003 less than half of the nursing positions in Ontario were full time; and

**#2 Whereas,** this disproportionate amount of part time and casual employment is a threat to the quality of patient care; and

**#3 Whereas,** many young graduate nurses unable to find full time positions look elsewhere for employment; and

**#4 Whereas,** the lack of full-time positions affects Registered Nurses (RN) and also Registered Practical Nurses (RPN); therefore be it

**#1 RESOLVED** that the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario adopt as policy

a) support for 70% full-time employment for Registered Nurses and Registered Practical Nurses, with strategic staffing plans developed co-operatively by the nursing profession, employers, and the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care (MOHLTC), to meet the needs of patients and staff, and

b) where nurses are working part time, they should receive benefits which are, at a minimum, proportional to their working time: and further be it

**#2 RESOLVED** that PCWO urge the Government of Ontario to  
**a) aim for 70% full-time employment for Registered Nurses (RN) and Registered Practical Nurses (RPN) and that MOHLTC work co-operatively with staff and employers to develop strategic staffing plans that ensure that the needs of patients and staff are met; and**

**b) where nurses are working part time they should receive benefits which are, at a minimum, proportional to their working time.**

**RESOLUTION 2005.2****HEALTH PREMIUM TAX**

- #1 Whereas,** the Canada Health Act specifies that Canadians have access to medically necessary hospital and physician services regardless of their ability to pay, and, the health premium cannot be enforced by withdrawal of services for non-payment; and
- #2 Whereas,** it is unclear whether employers or the employees will be paying the premium and this may lead to low income employees having to find scarce dollars to cover the cost, or to employer cuts to, for example, staff and hours of work; and
- #3 Whereas,** the working poor without full time employment, or working on contract, may not be able to afford the health premium without foregoing the necessities of life, and perhaps undermining their health over the long term; and
- #4 Whereas,** unlike the personal income tax, which is progressive (geared to income), the premium is a regressive tax which requires another level of management to administer, and will impact the working poor and the young unduly; therefore be it
- #1 RESOLVED** that the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario adopt as policy that health care costs be paid from personal taxes, not health premiums, thus ensuring equity and access to all, as required by the Canada Health Act; and
- #2 RESOLVED** **that the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario urge the Government of Ontario to withdraw the Health Premium, and rely instead on personal income taxes for health provision dollars.**

**RESOLUTION 2005.3****DELISTING OF HEALTH SERVICES:  
CHIROPRACTICS, OPTOMETRY AND PHYSIOTHERAPY**

- #1 Whereas,** the Government of Ontario has drastically curtailed the health services of physiotherapy and optometry covered by OHIP for Ontarians over 19 and under 64, and has de-listed chiropractic care for them
- #2 Whereas,** these services have provided both preventative and curative treatment of injuries, illness and chronic conditions, while prolonging the health, eyesight and independence of patients/clients, an important factor in future provincial and individual cost savings; and
- #3 Whereas,** the exclusion of patients/clients from such treatments according to their employment contracts or financial status, is against the principles of access to comprehensive, fair and equitable treatment as outlined by the Canada Health Act, and could jeopardize their health and well-being; and
- #4 Whereas,** prevention and improved healthcare has been this Government's mandate; therefore be it
- #1 RESOLVED** that the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario adopt as policy that the provision of the health services of Chiropractors, Optometry and Physiotherapy be provided under OHIP to all Ontario citizens, regardless of their ability to pay.
- #2 RESOLVED** **that the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario urge the Government of Ontario to re-list the services of Chiropractors, Optometry and Physiotherapy under OHIP, as integral to a comprehensive curative and preventative range of public health service and investigate an extension of OHIP coverage for these services.**



**RESOLUTION 2005.4**

**\* Note: PCWO is pleased that the Government moved to allow social assistance recipients to retain RESP assets, after this resolution was formulated, however PCWO approved this resolution in order to have policy for future use.**

**THE CANADA LEARNING BOND AND  
REGISTERED EDUCATION SAVINGS PLAN \***

**#1 Whereas,** the federal government's new Canada Learning Bond assures an initial contribution of \$500 and annual contributions of \$100 towards a Registered Education Savings Plan (RESP) for families with annual incomes of less than \$35,000 in each year they are eligible for the National Child Benefit Supplement; and

**#2 Whereas,** for many of the families with annual incomes of less than \$35,000 would be recipients of social assistance; and

**#3 Whereas,** current asset rules for welfare recipients in Ontario, would deem contributions to an RESP, such as the Canada Learning Bond, an income asset to be clawed back, as has happened with the National Child Benefit Supplement; and

**#4 Whereas,** this would mean that children in these families would be excluded from any possible benefit from the Canada Learning Bond, therefore be it

**#1 RESOLVED** that the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario adopt as policy that Registered Education Savings Plans, including the Canada Learning Bond not be considered an asset when families apply for income assistance.

**#2 RESOLVED** that the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario urge the Government of Ontario to not include Registered Education Savings Plans, including the Canada Learning Bond as assets when families apply for income assistance.

**RESOLUTION 2005.5****LANDFILLS**

**#1 Whereas,** landfills will be an essential part of any waste system for the near future; and

**#2 Whereas,** landfills can be a complementary part of a waste management system that focuses on the 3 R's (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle); and

**#3 Whereas,** optimum recycling efforts are encouraged when municipalities deal with their own waste within their own jurisdictions; and

**#4 Whereas,** landfills can be engineered so they capture waste runoff to be treated, along with methane gas to be used in co-generation projects or to produce electricity; and

**#5 Whereas,** old landfills can be remediated so they are safe and can be turned into beneficial public uses; therefore be it

**# 1 RESOLVED** that Provincial Council of Women of Ontario adopt as policy:

a) landfills must be engineered in such a way that they are safe, complementary to efforts to enhance 3 R programs, able to increase opportunities for environmentally sustainable co-generation projects and/or produce electricity, and be turned into beneficial public uses in future;

b) municipalities look after their own waste within their own jurisdictions; and

c) landfills be remediated so they are safe, and of public use at the end of their life cycle, ex. parks and to provide electricity; and

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

**a) ensure through regulation and encourage through policies and programs the engineering of landfills that are safe, complementary to enhanced 3 R programs, and able to provide opportunities for environmentally sustainable co-generation projects, and /or electricity generation; and**

**b) legislate that municipalities deal with waste within their own jurisdictions**

**c) ensure the remediation of old landfills, so they are both safe and of public use at the end of their life cycle.**

## **RESOLUTION 2005.6**

### **SUPPORT FOR EXTENDED FAMILIES**

**#1 Whereas,** the care of children by extended family members where natural parents are unable to provide care is an important community response to family crisis and provides children with care givers with whom they have developed an important relationship and emotional ties; and

**#2 Whereas,** Legislation does not allow “custodial care” by extended family members without adoption, and grandparents, or other relatives, are often reluctant to adopt children away from their own children, and would prefer “open adoptions”, rather than taking on “temporary” care giving roles; and

**#3 Whereas,** extended family care givers are penalized by the very low rates of subsidization for temporary care, which forces them to deplete savings, and in some cases, by Ontario Works legislation prevents them from receiving other federal child tax benefit monies, to help care for the child; and

**#4 Whereas,** other jurisdictions have found ways to support extended family care for children such as “open adoptions” and “subsidized guardianships”, methods supported by some Children’s Aid Societies and municipal governments, who consider family care giving best for the long term stability for children, therefore be it

**#1 RESOLVED** that the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario adopt as policy that

- a) custodial care by extended family members be recognized in Legislation; and
- b) the allowance rate reflect established rates for similar care by foster parents; and
- c) open adoptions be allowed through Legislation.

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

- a) **amend the Child and Family Service Act to allow custodial care by extended family members;**
- b) **alter the allowance rate for temporary care to reflect established rates for similar care by foster parents; and**
- c) **make legislative changes to allow open adoptions.**

### **POLICY UPDATES 2005**

Policy Updates are revisions of previously approved policy that has been reviewed and updated.

**UPDATE 2005-U1**

### **DEPOSIT-RETURN SYSTEM FOR BEVERAGE CONTAINERS**

- #1 Whereas:** in 1998 PCWO asked for a waste management approach called product stewardship that would support the 3Rs waste management hierarchy, fair and equitable treatment of all producers, a convenient system for consumers to return containers to producers, and the ultimate phase-out of non-refillable beverage containers over the long term; and
- #2 Whereas:** beverage containers comprise approximately 50% of the blue box by volume and considerable savings in collection costs could be achieved if these containers were eliminated from the blue box and placed in a deposit-return system, and
- #3 Whereas:** most other provinces have a deposit return system for beverage containers. Alberta recycles 83% of their cans, compared to about 50% in Ontario. Ontario beer stores have a deposit-return system which recycles over 90% of their containers, and
- #4 Whereas:** Toronto sends much of its garbage to the state of Michigan, which is tightening restrictions on the amount of recyclable material it will accept, therefore be it
- #1 RESOLVED** that the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario adopt as policy the adoption of a deposit-return system for all beverage containers with the goal that such a system will
- a) lead to the ultimate phase-out of non refillable plastic beverage containers,
  - b) be convenient for consumers to return empty containers to retailers,
  - c) provide fair and equitable treatment for all producers,
- and
- #2 RESOLVED** that the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario urge the Government of Ontario to institute through regulation a comprehensive deposit-return system for all beverage containers that will:

- a) lead to the ultimate phase-out of non refillable plastic beverage containers,
- b) be convenient for consumers to return empty containers to retailers,
- c) provide fair and equitable treatment for all producers.

## UPDATE 2005-U2/2004-05

### GAMBLING

- #1 Whereas,** in 2002 PCWO urged the government of Ontario to:
- a) strictly enforce its regulations regarding youth access to gambling
  - b) initiate programs within the educational system , starting at the elementary level, to alert children to the allure and subsequent risks of gambling, including the seemingly harmless scratch and win cards,
  - c) prohibit promotional ads for gambling and invest in government advertising regarding the dangers and addictive nature of gambling
  - d) adequately fund rehabilitation programs for those who are, or who are at risk of becoming, compulsive gamblers
  - e) find comprehensive studies that are updated yearly and made public, to assess the true costs of gambling and to compare these costs with revenues
  - f) reduce the reliance of institutions, charities and other public service bodies on gambling revenue, through adequate government funding of needed public services ex. health services; and
- #2 Whereas,** over the past few years, the province has increased its advertising to encourage gambling but fails to adequately invest in public education as to its dangers; more Ontarians are gambling and a significant number of these experience moderate to severe gambling problems; and the social and health costs are rising, ex. increased suicides; and

- #3 Whereas,** compulsive gamblers provide the Government with a substantive amount of its revenues from Casinos; and
- #4 Whereas,** as a result of a preliminary report to the government on gambling, the government announced a halt to new casinos and race track slot operations, promised a small increase in its investment in prevention of problem gambling, but not ruled out expansions of existing casinos; allowed two new race track projects approved by the previous government; and will wait for a further study to finalize future plans; and
- #5 Whereas,** the Ontario Problem Gambling Research Centre, which advises the government, has publicly raised significant concerns, ex. any expansion of gambling , the targeting of certain ethnic groups, the need to protect problem gamblers and the government's failure to spend promised money on problem gambling; and
- #6 Whereas,** other Provinces spend more money on problem gambling, conduct advertising warning the public of its dangers, not its attractions; and, use a variety of methods to control gambling in casinos that reduce the likelihood of compulsive gambling; therefore be it
- #1 RESOLVED** that the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario adopt as policy:
- a) opposition to government promotion of, and benefit from, gambling in Ontario
  - b) support for strong government regulations to control youth access to gambling, the prohibition of promotional advertising for gambling and any targeting of certain ethnic groups
  - c) support for government investments in advertising re the dangers of gambling, particularly its addictive nature, such as is done in other jurisdictions
  - d) support for adequate funding for programs for problem gamblers, prevention of problem gambling and protection of problem gamblers

- e) the need for government funded yearly studies of all aspects of gambling, including societal costs, eg. lost earned income due to addictions, hospital stays and public disclosure of same
- f) the need for adequate funding from tax revenues of public institutions and charities, rather than through gambling revenues.
- g) opposition to any expansion of gambling in Ontario

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

- a) cease the promotion of gambling in Ontario and refrain from expanding gambling opportunities**
- b) strictly enforce regulations regarding youth access to gambling**
- c) initiate programs in the school system, starting at the elementary level, to alert children to the allure, and the dangers of gambling**
- d) invest substantively in programs to help problem gamblers control their addiction and protect them from harm and to help those at risk of becoming problem gamblers**
- e) fund yearly studies to assess the true social costs of gambling and make them public**
- f) reduce the reliance of institutions and charities on gambling revenues and fund public health services through taxes, rather than gambling revenues.**
- g) institute effective methods to control compulsive gambling within casinos such as those used in other jurisdictions**



## EMERGENCY RESOLUTIONS

Emergency Resolutions are presented at the Annual General Meeting and are voted for acceptance as emerging issues that require action prior to the next Annual General Meeting.

### EMERGENCY RESOLUTION 2005-1

#### INSULIN PUMPS FOR DIABETICS

- #1 Whereas,** diabetes is the leading cause of blindness, amputation, kidney and heart disease in Ontario; and
- #2 Whereas,** type 1 or Juvenile diabetes is a particularly life altering condition; and
- #3 Whereas,** people with diabetes make up only 6% of Ontario's population yet account for 32% of heart attacks, 43% of heart failure cases, 30% of strokes, 51% of new dialysis patients, and 70% of amputation; and
- #4 Whereas,** Insulin Pump Therapy not only prevents complications for diabetics, but in many cases reverses the effects of highly fluctuating blood sugar levels by putting a regular amount of insulin into the body closely matching what the body normally does; and
- #5 Whereas,** the cost of the pump (\$6,500 plus) and the cost of monthly supplies (\$300 plus) prevents Ontarians from having the use of the pump; and
- #6 Whereas,** the high cost of insulin pump therapy under OHIP will be more than off-set in the long-term by greatly reduced hospitalization, laser eye treatments, dialysis, heart infarctions, amputations, etc.; and
- #7 Whereas,** Bill 55 received all party support in its introduction, passed second reading and has been referred to the

Standing Committee on Social Policy for study prior to its return to the House for third reading; therefore be it

**#1 RESOLVED** that the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario adopt as policy support for an amendment to the Health Insurance Act to include the provision of insulin pumps and related supplies as insured services for diabetics; and

**#2 RESOLVED** **that the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario urge the Government of Ontario to pass Bill 55, An Act to Amend the Health Insurance Act (Insulin Pumps for Diabetics) to ensure that Insulin Pumps and related supplies are covered under the Health Insurance Act.**

## EMERGING AND ONGOING ISSUES

### SHARIA LAW

The matter of equal rights for women under the Family Law Act has been a major focus of the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario, and Council has written numerous letters to the government on this important issue. In late August PCWO began its petition campaign against Sharia law and were pleased that within weeks of our campaign the Premier announced: **“There will be no Sharia law in Ontario. There will be no religious arbitration in Ontario. There will be one law for all Ontarians.”**

With the campaign only just begun PCWO has submitted to the Premier our petition with over 700 signatures. We urge the government to ensure that in the drafting of the legislation that women’s rights are upheld.

### SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

#### Child Poverty

Provincial Council of Women has consistently urged the Government to

increase social assistance benefits, as a means of curbing hunger, improving health outcomes, and ensuring parents have enough money to both feed their children and pay the rent. Children are the most visible casualties when needs are not met due to inadequate family income. Teachers see the effects of hunger in their classrooms both academically and socially. Front-line agencies know that children are being moved from school to school, are visiting food banks with parents, cannot afford to participate in many activities with their school friends, and are ill more often - sometimes from living in unsuitable accommodations. While PCWO appreciates that the Government has raised the welfare rates by 3%, allowed a flow-through of the Child Tax Benefit Supplement percentage increase, and is making many progressive changes to the rules to help parents move into the work place, we are most disturbed that after ten years of no increases to benefits, and with inflation adding at least 2% yearly to the cost of living, that the children whose parents receive social assistance live such difficult lives. We urge the government to raise the social assistance rate to an adequate level or at least cease clawing-back the Child Tax Benefit Supplement. The poorest children and their families deserve this kind of investment, and society as a whole will be the better for it.

### **Single Employable Persons**

Provincial Council of Women also notes that single persons receiving social assistance are in a very difficult situation, with the provincial basic needs and shelter allowance benefits falling short of actually meeting these needs, leaving recipients further behind each month. There is no chance of a single employable person being able to rent suitable housing, eat properly, have a phone, or pay for transportation costs to seek a job. These are huge barriers to that person maintaining basic living standards or finding and keeping employment. We urge the government to move quickly to provide adequate financial support to single employable persons.

### **Persons with Disabilities**

PCWO commends the government for passing the Accessibility for

Ontarians with Disabilities' Act. This is truly ground breaking legislation that will enhance the lives of persons with disabilities. We are concerned however, that a significant number of persons with physical and mental health challenges remain outside the work force, and many struggle to meet their basic needs with inadequate disability allowances. There is also a growing public concern, particularly amongst service providers, that the government may disallow the allowance for enhanced benefit for nutritional needs. PCWO encourages continuation of this particular investment, as a prerequisite for prevention of further deterioration to the health of persons with disabilities who receive social assistance. To do so will save considerable health care dollars in the future.

### **Extended Family Care Givers**

PCWO resolution 2005-6 speaks to the need for supports for extended family care givers. We commend the government for its recent decision to give greater funding flexibility to Children's Aid Societies (CAS) to provide additional supports for extended family members of children not formally taken into CAS care, as noted in the 2005 Child Welfare Transformation document.

However, Ontario Works monies are not yet available, and any extra money provided by CAS's is deducted from welfare payments. PCWO urges the government to act quickly to pass proposed amendments to the Child and Family Services Act that would provide a legal custody option that would allow for kin to care for a child, without the child having to relinquish its name, contact with family or rights of inheritance.

## **Domestic Violence**

In previous Briefs to the Government of Ontario we have expressed concern about violence to women. We were pleased to note that extra funds have been allocated for second stage housing and for women's shelters.

However, it seems that the focus on the criminal aspects of women abuse has led to a tendency to ignore the reality that domestic violence is much more than a crime. Until all families have direct access to affordable housing, adequate income support and accessible daycare, women will still be vulnerable to male violence. Groups working to end violence against women report that funding is still below the amount required for staff training and education programs. In the long term, prevention is much less expensive than dealing with the aftermath of domestic violence.

## **HOUSING**

PCWO is pleased that the long-awaited provincial-federal affordable housing agreement finally appears to be in place and includes concrete steps toward implementation. We commend the fact that this announcement included support from the Mayor of Toronto and AMO. This \$402 million agreement is a much-anticipated start and we are glad that there has finally been some movement on this issue. We hope that further steps will soon be taken to improve long-term affordable housing for the needy in our province.

PCWO considers this to be a small step forward in view of the enormity of the problem. Is this government truly willing to give housing for the needy the priority it deserves? Thousands of households have been on waiting lists

across the province for years, and many are at risk of homelessness. Using food cupboards and day programs help some to stretch their funds and avoid eviction, but these low-income households are in constant stress, which affects both individuals and children. As you know, many studies have shown that the lack of adequate, affordable housing affects lives. In both the long and short term this situation will substantially increase costs to the province in terms of health, education, employability and social stability.

PCWO notes that \$80 million of this will be dedicated to rent supplements. We understand that one of the reasons for the rent supplements, according to Federal Housing Minister Joe Fontana is to ‘make sure the most needy get looked after first.’ While these supplements of \$350 a household may help those in midrange need, one in six renters in the Toronto area earn less than \$12,000 a year. The rent supplement of \$350 would afford them only a lower end of the scale room and nothing for a single parent family. Similar situations are true elsewhere in the province. We are very concerned that this agreement does not serve those in deep core need.

We do recognize that rent supplements may play a role in providing quick assistance to needy renters and are useful in the short term, but they are a very costly expenditure in the long term. They also leave the tenants again at risk at the end of the five year term, or when the vacancy rate drops and rents escalate. The only worthy long-term use for rent supplements, which we perceive, is to support co-ops and non-profits in providing rent-to-income units as part of their housing mix. These groups can usually manage these to provide long-term affordability. As you know, every study of rent supplements over the long-term has shown that they are far more costly than investing in permanent rent-to-income housing.

While PCWO is pleased that, after a decade of practically no affordable housing construction, 5320 units of affordable housing will be built in the next 5 years; this seems like only a finger in the dike regarding the real need. Your campaign promise of 20,000 affordable units, 6600 supportive housing units, and 33,000 housing allowances was much closer to the true need.

## **HEALTH**

This is the year of many changes and a new direction for our province in healthcare. In this Brief, PCWO submits 3 resolutions on healthcare and it is important to repeat that PCWO is concerned with:

1. **Health Care Premiums:** The Canada Health Act specifies that Canadians have access to medical, hospital, and physician services regardless of their ability to pay, and the health premium cannot be enforced by withdrawal of services for non-payment. We urge the government to rely on personal income taxes for health care provision dollars.
2. **De-Listing of Services:** The de-listed services (Chiropractics, Optometry, and Physiotherapy) are not acceptable, as those services are preventative. Prevention is one of the most needed changes to slow the use of healthcare dollars for treatment. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure and should have never gone out of style. PCWO will continue to urge the government to reverse this decision.
3. **Full-Time Nursing Positions:** The inability of the healthcare system to provide full-time work for nurses is having and will continue to have an adverse impact on patient care and on nurse retention and recruitment.

PCWO continues to monitor additional changes within our healthcare system and in particular the role of Local Health Integration Networks. PCWO is encouraged by the direction; however, we are cautious of its potential to be used: 1. as a barrier to dealing directly with elected government officials and 2. to further the possibility of privatization.

## **ENVIRONMENT**

### **The Great Lakes Basin, and Water Diversion - Annex 2001 Agreements**

PCWO congratulates the Government and its leadership regarding the Great Lakes Charter Annex Agreements. The Ministry of Natural Resources has worked hard to incorporate the concerns of a very involved public that the Great Lakes Basin be protected for the health and economic well being of millions of people on both sides of the border. The Ministry is also to be commended for its willingness to strive to make the agreements even more protective in areas such as intra- basin water transfers and the potential for the commodification of water, with the possibility of a trade challenge under NAFTA. The Great Lakes Basin is an extraordinarily valuable natural resource and PCWO is pleased that the Government is working hard to protect its long-term sustainability.

### **The Greenbelt**

The unique and very limited Niagara fruit lands have long been a concern of PCWO. The Greenbelt Act and policies will certainly help ensure that the best lands in Canada are protected from rampant urban sprawl over the next few years. PCWO has concerns that longer-term zoning protection will be impossible without some form of legal restrictions such as restrictive covenants/easements on the farmland title, as recommended by PCWO



policy in 2001 in support of a re-institution of the Tender Fruit Land Program.

While PCWO is pleased that a significant acreage of other prime farmlands in the Greenbelt will be protected, we are concerned that some lands in Hamilton and Brampton, that were under a Cabinet freeze until the Act was passed, are now unprotected, and that large areas of class 1 farmlands outside of the Greenbelt, both south and north of the GTA, are under significant development pressures.

As well, highways in the planning and Environmental Assessment stages, such as the Mid - Peninsula corridor and the GTA East/West corridor south of the Oak Ridges Moraine, could, if built, significantly damage key environmental features, for example, the Niagara Escarpment. This would run counter to the Infrastructure Renewal Act policies to protect them and the Provincial policies to protect significant wetlands.

### **Incineration**

PCWO commends the Ministry of Environment for setting an ambitious waste diversion rate of 60% by 2006, and finds it commendable that in line with this directive, municipalities such as Toronto are aiming for zero waste targets. Nevertheless, PCWO is disturbed that some municipalities are exploring incineration as a method of diversion. PCWO is also concerned that waste consultants are encouraging municipalities to build “new technology” incinerators, saying that they are almost without emissions; at the same time, some scientists are noting concerns, e.g. finer particulate matter, which goes deeper into the lungs, and mercury and other pollutants, that can travel considerable distances, and accumulate in the soil and end up

in the food chain. We encourage the Minister of Environment to reinstate the 1992 ban on municipal incineration.

### **Nuclear**

PCWO applauds the Province's recent support of electricity planning that will enhance energy efficiencies, conservation measures and renewable alternative electricity generation, and its appointment of a conservation official within the Ontario Power Authority. This latter move shows a commitment to a new way of looking at the long term future of electricity provision, and opportunities to build upon the many excellent recommendations of the 2002 Standing Committee on Alternative Energy Sources.

We are, however, dismayed at the Government's possible willingness to embrace nuclear power as a long term solution to our electricity shortages without a public discussion, should the Ontario Power Authority recommend it. Nuclear power is dangerous throughout its life-cycle, is exorbitantly expensive, is not a panacea for solving the greenhouse gas problem, and there are no solutions on the horizon for the safe disposal of used nuclear fuel. By Atomic Energy of Canada calculations, the completion of new nuclear plants will be way beyond a time line that is helpful for our current situation, and foreign technologies even further.

Experience elsewhere has shown that investments in energy conservation and efficiencies and renewable electricity provision, equal to that of the massive government subsidies for traditional electricity sources, particularly at the federal level in nuclear power, can move us in an environmentally sustainable way without the huge risks of nuclear power. We urge the

government to consider the long term health and safety for Ontarians as paramount and to immediately initiate a wide ranging public discussion on the electricity future of Ontario, particularly as it relates to nuclear power.

## **EDUCATION**

Many of our PCWO policies reflect our belief that practical, applied learning is as important for many students as are the more academic studies. For example, in 2004 PCWO urged the government to invest in “technical training for youth starting as early as grade 5.” In our Briefs to the Government we have also drawn attention to the difficulties posed by the drastic changes in curricula, provincial testing of students, the reduction of the secondary school curriculum to four years, and crowded classrooms. PCWO members have been particularly concerned about students in the basic and general level streams, those with language and cultural barriers and those with individual differences in learning styles, who have had to cope with these drastic changes in education; all of which have combined to result in a very high drop out rate and the loss of opportunities for many students.

**In light of these policies, PCWO commends the government for its recently announced plan to hire more teachers to help struggling students, reduce class sizes, revise courses so that they are more appropriate for all students, and to create an alternate high school diploma focused on vocational skills. The problems have been evident for years and many students’ lives have been impacted significantly. We urge the government to act quickly to fulfill its promises so that others will not lose the opportunities an appropriate education can bring**

## **CONCLUSION**

The Provincial Council of Women of Ontario would like to thank the Government for the opportunity to present its views and to discuss them with MPPs and staff. As a non-partisan group with a long history of working to improve the life of all Ontarians, we are fortunate to have access to decision makers. We urge the government to consider our Brief carefully. The resolutions were developed over an involved consultation process that results in policies that are both timely and relevant. The PCWO offers these as a positive contribution to governance that serves the diverse peoples of our Province.

## **PCWO BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2005-6**

### **President: Milica Kovacevich, MA, BES**

Was elected President of PCWO in 2003 after having been an active member in the St. Catharines and District Council of Women for many years. Ms. Kovacevich has an undergraduate degree in Urban and Regional Planning from the University of Waterloo; her Master of Arts in Social Welfare Policy from McMaster University and in 2002 attended the Harvard Business School Executive Education Program in Performance Measurement and Effective Management of Non-Profit Organizations. She is active Rotarian and volunteers in her community of St. Catharines. She has worked in the non-profit sector for over 20 years in senior management and in government for 5 years.

### **Treasurer: Mary Potter**

Mary has her Bachelor of Household Science and has spent most of her life volunteering. She is a Past-President of the Social Planning and Research Council of St. Catharines & Thorold, the St. Catharines and District Council of Women and the Friends of Malcolmson Eco-Park. In the National Council of Women of Canada she has been a Vice-President, Constitution Convener and is currently Resolutions Convener. She is currently Treasurer of the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario. Mary is also a member of several naturalist groups in the Niagara Region having served as membership secretary for the Peninsula Field Naturalists.

### **Secretary: Margaret Jennings**

Ms. Jennings is a retired teacher having taught in Nova Scotia and Windsor, Ontario. She is currently President of the Windsor Council of Women and active member of the Anglican Church, Beta Sigma Phi Sorority, Essex County Field Naturalists and Retired Women Teachers Association.

**Past President: Jacqueline Truax**

Ms. Truax is a graduate of Seneca and was an ECE teacher for 16 years and is currently retired. Active with her church, Ms Truax currently volunteers her time assisting seniors. Ms. Truax is a Past President of the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario and is responsible for PCWO Archives. Jacqueline has been active as a member of the Toronto Council of Women for the past 20 years serving as a director and on various committees.

**Vice President Environment: Gracia Janes**

Ms. Janes is a former teacher and School Board Trustee. Ms. Janes helped found the fruit-land preservation movement in Ontario in 1976 and continues to be a driving force in the Niagara-based Preservation of Agricultural Lands Society. She has chaired the Niagara Social Assistance Advisory Committee since 1988, and the Regional Niagara Community Services Department Social Assistance Advisory Committee since 1999. She is a member of the Regional Niagara Municipality of Quality Council and the Regional Niagara Chair's Agricultural Task Force. Gracia has served on the Board of Directors at all levels of Council of Women, and was the PCWO President from 1999 to 2002. She is the recipient of the Ontario Medal for Citizenship, the Canada 125 Medal, the Queens Golden Jubilee Medal, and the YWCA Women of Distinction Award.

**Vice President Health: Kim Stasiak, RN**

Ms Stasiak received her RN Diploma Graduate of Mack School of Nursing, 1977. She has worked at various nursing jobs, including Private-duty, Nursing Home, Summer Camp. Ms. Stasiak also worked for 2 years at Sick Children's Hospital in Toronto, 11 years in Pediatrics, and 14 years in ER in St. Catharines. She has been involved in her professional organizations, including Emergency Nurses Association (ENAO), Political Rep for Ontario Nurses Association (ONA), Registered Nurses Association of Ontario (RNAO), a local Healthcare Advocate, and presently appointed as a founding Board of Director on the Hamilton, Niagara, Haldimand, Brant Local Health Integrated Network (LHIN). Kim is an active volunteer and member of her Local and Provincial Council of Women for the last 6 years.

**Vice President Housing: Beth Cook**

Beth Cook graduated with a BA from UCLA, and studied International Affairs and Political Science, as a MA student in Political Science however left to accept US State Department Internship. Beth was one of 4 women (21 men) in the program. She spent 2 years as an Action Officer, Council of Europe Affairs. Ms. Cook married and came to Canada to follow husband's diplomatic career. She joined the Ottawa Council of Women in 1987 and has served in various executive positions as well as a Vice President of PCWO. For the past 22 years Beth has been active with Anglican Church Women as OCW representative on Social Action, Multi-faith and Housing. She has held numerous

volunteer positions at home and abroad including first President, Board of Directors, Gloucester Centre for Community Resources, 4 years Gloucester City Social Services Advisory Board and President for 2 years. She is a founding committee member of The Well/La Source, a 22 year old day program for women in need, where she has served in many capacities and currently as Treasurer.

**Vice President Status of Women: Kelly Schwab**

Currently Mrs Schwab is the Executive Director of the Windsor Women's Incentive Centre; a not-for-profit organization working for reform in the area of women's issues. She is a graduate from St. Clair College with diplomas in Microcomputer Applications and in Bookkeeping and Payroll Accreditation. She has used these skills to assist other charitable organizations as well as a volunteer with Habitat for Humanity.

**Vice President Social Development: Lisa Swant**

Ms. Swant has been involved in sales and is currently the Community Relations Manager for a home health care company, primarily focused on seniors. Ms. Swant is an active member and Vice President of the Ottawa Council of Women. She was a member of the National Laughter Day planning Committee in 2004 and is regularly involved in fundraising efforts for both Parkinson's and Alzheimer's Diseases in her community of Ottawa.

**Vice President Economics: May Toth**

Ms Toth received her initial training in nursing-midwife from Scotland. She then pursued further education and received a Bachelor in Nursing from Queens' University and a Masters Degree in Nurse Sciences from Boston University. As well May has received additional Certificates from Emergency Management Ontario in both General and Education. She has been involved at the teaching level at McMaster University and in nursing schools in Kingston and Toronto and, for many years involved in nursing administration. May is active in her community of Hamilton in the areas of environment and multiculturalism.

**Vice President Media: Dr. Yvonne Bogorya-Buczowski**

Dr. Bogorya-Buczowski received her PhD in Strategic Management and has been teaching management subjects for over 15 years. She is a member of the board and Past President of the Polish Canadian Women's Federation. Last year she was Director of the Canada Ethno-Cultural Council. Dr. Bogorya-Buczowski is the National Council of Women of Canada's representative on the CNE Board of Directors. She has been active in the Toronto community for the past 20 years and received for her service Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal and Provincial Volunteer Award.

**Vice President Resolutions: Marianne Wilkinson**

Ms. Wilkinson has served for 17 years on the Councils of March Township, the City of Kanata and the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton, including 9 as Mayor of Kanata. She is a lifetime volunteer giving of her resources to the Beaverbrook Community Association, Kanata Food Cupboard, Wired Women Society of Ottawa, Kanata Canada Day Committee, St. John's Anglican Church and Blue Heron Cooperative

Housing Development. She is a graduate of the University of Toronto, Trinity College in Geography and a Masters degree in Management Studies from McGill University. She received the Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal in 2003 and received the Y Women of Distinction Award for Lifetime Achievement.

**Vice President Seniors: Thelma McGillivray**

Ms McGillivray has a BA in Political Science, BSW, McMaster University, MSW (Social Work) Wilfrid Laurier University, and Certification in Mediation, from the University of Toronto. Thelma has worked for C.A.S., Mental Health Services, Unified Family Court, and Private Family Practice. Thelma has had 30 years experience in various local community, provincial and national organizations. As a member of Council of Women Thelma has been active at all levels and currently is the President of the Hamilton Council of Women. As well, she is the Past Board member of Elizabeth Fry Society; Past President of CFUW, Burlington Chapter; Past Chair, Status of Women for City of Hamilton; Present Board member of Ontario Coalition of Senior Organizations Ontario (OCSO); Past President of the Older Women's Network and Present Board member of the New Horizons Review Committee for Ontario. Thelma has received the Woman of the Year in Communications, from the City of Hamilton and the Mayor of Hamilton's Award for Volunteerism.

**Vice President Communications: Shirley Browne**

Ms. Browne graduated with her teaching credentials from England. Ms. Browne has travelled extensively living in England, Jamaica, Burundi, Togo, Quebec and has settled in Ottawa. Throughout her travels Shirley has been actively involved in those communities in a professional capacity as a teacher and/or involved in theatre. Shirley is an active member of Council of Women at all three levels and has been the President of both Ottawa and Provincial Councils of Women. In addition, Shirley has been active in her community as a member of the Board and a volunteer House Mother of the James St. Rehabilitation Centre for Addicted Teenagers, Chair of the Centretown Churches Social Action Committee and Chair of St Barnabas Outreach Committee which has been working with several dispossed Rwandan families in Canada, Africa and Holland trying to improve their status with refugee boards and immigration departments as well as raising money for their basic needs.