

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

**85<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL BRIEF**

**FOR PRESENTATION TO**  
**THE GOVERNMENT OF ONTARIO**

**THE HONOURABLE DALTON MCGUINTY, PREMIER**

**Honourary Patron**  
**The Honourable David Onley, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario**

**Thelma McGillivray, President**  
**Luba Podolsky, Vice-President, Resolutions**

**NOVEMBER 2008**

**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 –**

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

**PROVINCIALY ORGANIZED SOCIETIES -**

Association of Early Childhood Educators of Ontario  
Business and Professional Women's Clubs of Ontario  
Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario  
Older Women's Network on Ontario Inc.  
Ontario Dental Hygienists' Association  
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

## **PREAMBLE:**

The Provincial Council of Women of Ontario (PCWO) is pleased to present its 2008 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 85th 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 of Canada (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 13 Provincially Organized Societies.

This year, PCWO will be available on Monday, November 17 and Tuesday, November 18, 2008, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. each day, in Room 2, main floor, 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, and the responses of other political parties, on the content of the resolutions, which are presented in full in this Brief.

## **THE RESOLUTION PROCESS:**

PCWO speaks only on policies approved by the membership through the resolution process. Each year 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 affiliates 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 presented to the delegates from each affiliate 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. This grass roots process, following basic democratic principles, produces policies that PCWO can act upon.

The following Resolutions in this Brief were approved at the 2008 AGM which was held in Toronto, Ontario, in May, for presentation to the Government of Ontario.

## **RESOLUTIONS 2008:**

- 1. JUSTICE FOR INJURED WORKERS**
- 2. PHYSICIAN PROMOTION OF INSURANCE POLICIES FOR UNINSURED MEDICAL SERVICES**
- 3. DENTICARE**

4. INTER-PROVINCIAL TRADE AGREEMENTS THAT UNDERMINE GOVERNMENT POLICY
5. THE NEED FOR SUPPORTIVE HOME CARE FOR SENIORS
6. THE COST OF CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS
7. PROTECTION FOR ANIMALS

**UPDATES:**

- U1. PAYING FOR ESSENTIAL CLASSROOM SUPPLIES AND FEES IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS
- U2. STANDARDS OF CARE IN LONG TERM CARE FACILITIES

**RESOLUTION HIGHLIGHTS:**

Education  
Housing and Homelessness  
Home Care  
Long Term Care

**EMERGING AND ONGOING ISSUES**

**PCWO BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2008-2009**

**2008 RESOLUTIONS IN FULL**

**2008:1 JUSTICE FOR INJURED WORKERS**

**Whereas 1** injured workers in Ontario have lost 18% of the value of their benefits since 1996 and even the latest Ontario budget will provide only a 7% increase over the next three years; and

**Whereas 2** the policy of the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) continues the practice of deeming injured workers to have jobs which they do not have, and cutting benefits accordingly; and

**Whereas 3** over the past ten years the WSIB's accident fund has lost two billion dollars to employer incentives to reduce lost time, which has translated into a highly adversarial campaign against workers seeking to make claims or to have time to heal; and

**Whereas 4** 35% of the workers in Ontario are not covered by workers' compensation legislation and must rely on private insurance or social assistance after injury; therefore be it

**RESOLVED 1** that the Provincial council of Women of Ontario adopt as policy that:

- a) injured workers receive comprehensive benefits and cost of living increases
- b) health and safety of the workplace be a priority
- c) all workers in Ontario be covered by workers' compensation

**RESOLVED 2** that the Provincial council of Women of Ontario urge the

Government of Ontario to:

- a) extend the full cost of living increases to injured workers' compensation
- b) have the Minister of Labour use his power under Section 167 of the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act to direct the WSIB to eliminate the practice of deeming injured workers to have jobs which they do not have
- c) change incentives to employers to improve actual health and safety in the workplace rather than lost-time measures
- d) extend workers' compensation coverage to all workers in Ontario

## **2008:2      PHYSICIAN PROMOTION OF INSURANCE POLICIES FOR UNINSURED MEDICAL SERVICES**

**Whereas 1** Physicians are allowed to charge patients for services that are uninsured under OHIP and some are aggressively promoting insurance policies to cover varying levels of service; and

**Whereas 2** although patients do not have to buy-into the insurance policies and are guaranteed good medical services, whether or not they have such a policy, having a doctor promote such insurance plans could be considered coercive; and

**Whereas 3** given the shortage of Physicians, patients are not easily able to find a Physician who is not charging for uninsured services, and the presentation of a patient/Physician contract to insure them could be considered undue pressure; and

**Whereas 4** many cannot afford the cost of an insurance package; therefore be it

**RESOLVED 1** that the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario adopt as policy that Physicians be prohibited from promoting insurance policies for services not covered by the Ontario Health Insurance Plan; and be it further

**RESOLVED 2** that the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario urge the Government of Ontario to prohibit Physician from promoting insurance policies for services not covered by the Ontario Health Insurance Plan.

## **2008:3      DENTICARE**

**Whereas 1** dental work is not covered by medicare and many low income people are not covered by company or group insurance plans, and therefore go without dental care; and

**Whereas 2** lack of access to preventive and remedial dental health care, causes further deterioration of oral health, pain and suffering and long term health problems, as well as a making it difficult to get and hold a job, and interact socially; and

**Whereas 3** with the exception of children of elementary school age, who receive some preventive care through school programs, access to dental care varies throughout the province for low income persons; therefore be it

**RESOLVED 1** that the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario adopt as policy, that preventive and remedial dental costs for low income persons and those receiving social assistance be paid through a provincial health program; and be it further

**RESOLVED 2** that the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario urge the Government of Ontario to initiate a dental program so that all low income persons may receive preventive and remedial dental care.

**2008: 4 INTER-PROVINCIAL TRADE AGREEMENTS THAT UNDERMINE GOVERNMENT POLICY**

**Whereas 1** the Premiers of Alberta and British Columbia recently signed the Trade Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement (TILMA) without public consultation, debate or discussion in their respective legislatures; and

**Whereas 2** TILMA allows corporations to challenge legislation, programs or policies of provincial and municipal governments, or delegated legal authority, if it interferes with trade, investment or labour mobility between provinces, even if the legislation is protective of the public good: and

**Whereas 3** while some legislation, programs and policies may be exempt from TILMA, exemptions are reviewed each year with a view to eventually eliminating all exemptions; and

**Whereas 4** TILMA's unelected dispute panel may levy fines of up to \$5 million for infractions, and these will be enforced by the Canadian Courts; therefore be it

**RESOLVED 1** that the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario adopt as policy that inter-provincial agreements not undermine the protective laws, policies and programs of the Provincial government, or its delegated authorities in law, such as municipalities; and be it further

**RESOLVED 2** that the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario urge the Government of Ontario to refrain from signing any inter-provincial agreements that could undermine any of its protective laws, policies and programs, and those of its delegated authorities in law.

**2008: 5 THE NEED FOR SUPPORTIVE HOME CARE FOR SENIORS**

**Whereas 1** our rapidly aging society will have increasing numbers of elderly persons in need of supportive care such as personal care and help with daily activities to address age-related functional deficits, and

**Whereas 2** virtually all seniors, men and women, would prefer to "age in place", in their own familiar homes, if supportive home care and community services were available, and see Long Term Care homes as a necessary and desired option only when strong home care resources can no longer meet their needs, and

**Whereas 3** our current publicly provided home care is under overwhelming pressure to deal with patients coming home after an acute-care hospitalization to shorten length of stay in hospital, and

**Whereas 4** government investment in supportive home care has been clearly demonstrated to be less costly than expensive health care interventions in acute-care hospitals and emergency rooms, therefore be it

**RESOLVED 1** that the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario adopt as policy that publicly funded supportive home care and comprehensive community services for seniors with functional deficits and/or chronic illness be provided to enhance the quality of seniors' lives and the sustainability of our health care system, and

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

- a) invest in supportive home care to allow seniors with age-related functional deficits and/or chronic illnesses to "age in place"
- b) expand community services which will enable seniors to stay in their own familiar homes as long as possible.

## **2008: 6 THE COST OF CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS**

**Whereas 1** The need for increased availability of affordable housing has been noted in resolutions of the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario in 1982,88,91, and in the 2004 resolution update 3 the crisis in homelessness was brought forward once again; and

**Whereas 2** the special problem of long-term chronic homelessness has not been solved by shelters and current humanitarian programs, and

**Whereas 3** a homeless person can consume an estimated \$100,000 a year in police and court costs and healthcare and social agency costs, while a small apartment and regular support services can cost approximately \$15,000 per year , and

**Whereas 4** the new approach of providing suitable supportive housing has helped many chronically homeless people to change their lives in over 30 American and at least 2 Canadian cities to date, and

**Whereas 5** the economic argument is helping to spur action by a diverse group of community leaders in Ottawa and other Ontario communities, therefore be it

**RESOLVED 1** that the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario adopt as policy the need to stress the economic advantages of solving the bulk of the chronic homelessness problem, and that

**RESOLVED 2** PCWO urge the Government of Ontario to work with community leaders and agencies, and other levels of government to provide and fund a long-term plan to reduce chronic homelessness in Ontario.

## **2008:7 PROTECTION FOR ANIMALS**

- Whereas 1** Animal protection laws in Ontario are less stringent than anywhere else in Canada, and
- Whereas 2** there is currently no clear definition of what constitutes an offence against animals, and
- Whereas 3** except for puppy and kitten mills, animal cruelty investigators do not have the power to inspect places where it is suspected animals are being mistreated, and
- Whereas 4** current legislation is too lenient to be an effective deterrent to abuse or neglect of animals; therefore be it

- RESOLVED 1** That the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario establish policy that:
- a) the abuse and neglect of animals be an offence in Ontario
  - b) there be a provincial standard of animal care
  - c) the penalty be strong enough to be a deterrent to abuse and neglect
  - d) cruelty officers be authorized to inspect any place that has animals where there is suspected abuse

- RESOLVED 2** That the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario urge the Government of Ontario to:
- a) amend the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act to make abuse and neglect of animals an offence in Ontario
  - b) establish a provincial standard of animal care
  - c) significantly strengthen penalties for animal abuse and neglect, including up to a lifetime prohibition from having an animal
  - d) authorize cruelty officers to inspect places that raise, sell display or process animals – domestic, native or exotic – where there is suspected abuse or neglect
  - e) authorize cruelty officers to inspect the condition of animals in transit

## **UPDATES:**

### **U1. PAYING FOR ESSENTIAL CLASSROOM SUPPLIES AND FEES IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS**

- Whereas 1** the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario, in 2006, urged the Government of Ontario to ensure that fundraising should not be necessary for essential school needs in publicly funded elementary schools, and
- Whereas 2** underfunding of schools has resulted in many of them requiring children to purchase essential classroom supplies and to pay fees for school activities, and
- Whereas 3** many families with low incomes can not afford these costs, especially where there are several school-age children in the same home, therefore be it

- RESOLVED 1** that the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario (PCWO)

- adopt as policy that:
- a) classroom supplies deemed essential at each grade level of elementary school be supplied without cost to pupils, and
  - b) that fees for extra-curricular school activities be discussed with parent councils; and that

- RESOLVED 1** PCWO urge the Government of Ontario to:
- a) determine what classroom supplies are essential at each elementary grade level, and
  - b) mandate its public school-boards to provide each of its elementary school pupils with grade-appropriate essential classroom supplies without charge to parents; and that
- RESOLVED 3** PCWO urge the Government of Ontario to increase per pupil funding to cover the cost of classroom supplies and curricular- related school activities outside the classroom.

## **U2. STANDARDS OF CARE IN LONG TERM CARE FACILITIES**

**Whereas 1** In 2004, Resolution Update U1 of the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario called for the **REINSTATEMENT** of mandatory hours of nursing care to a minimum of three hours per patient per day in long term care homes, and

**Whereas 2** residents of long term care facilities have complex medical problems, and

**Whereas 3** the minimum hours of “hands-on” nursing and personal care for Long term care residents is recommended at three and one-half hours per patient per day by the Ontario Health Coalition and supported by studies in the U.S. and Canada, and

**Whereas 4** Alberta, New Brunswick, Saskatchewan and Nova Scotia have raised, or are raising their standards of care, and

**Whereas 5** a documented increase in violence in Long Term Care Homes is linked directly to staffing problems; be it

**RESOLVED 1** that the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario adopt as policy that the mandatory minimum standard of “hands on” care in Long Term Care facilities be set at 3.5 hours per patient per day, and that

**RESOLVED 2** the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario urge the Government of Ontario to legislate a mandatory minimum of three and one-half hours of “hands on” care per patient per day for residents of Long Term Care facilities

## **RESOLUTION HIGHLIGHTS**

### **EDUCATION**

PCWO have many policies on Education. Indeed, the theme of this 85th Semi-Annual Meeting is entitled EDUCATION IN THE 21ST CENTURY. Applicable for this section, we present one Update on Education in the 2008 BRIEF.

### **2008:U1. PAYING FOR ESSENTIAL CLASSROOM SUPPLIES AND FEES IN**

**ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS:** PCWO was moved to put this resolution forth for many reasons. With reference to our **2006:10 resolution SCHOOL FUNDRAISING** we urged the Government of Ontario to ensure that fundraising should not be necessary for essential school needs in publicly-funded elementary schools. The underfunding of schools has resulted in many schools requiring children to purchase essential classroom supplies and to pay fees for school activities. Many families with low incomes cannot afford these costs, especially when there are several school age children in the same home.

PCWO members have become aware of the declining enrollment and believe that lack of family funds may have some impact on the attendance of boys and girls. Given the present economic recession resulting in loss of many jobs, thus loss of income, families may find it necessary to depend on their older children to find employment. Adding the costs of essential classroom supplies as well as fees for school activities, offers little incentive for these children to remain in school. Studies have shown time again that unless children acquire an education, financial security for their future is in doubt. Thus we urge the Government to determine what classroom supplies are essential, mandate its school boards to provide the necessary supplies and to increase per pupil funding to cover these needs and curricular-related school activities outside the classroom.

At the same time, we commend the Government for its initiatives in education for there have been many. We were especially heartened in 2007, that funds were directed annually (to 2011) for education and the government's plan to expand kindergarten programs to a full day. Studies such as the Mustard/McCain (**PCWO Resolution 2000.2 Brief**) demonstrate how vital early childhood education is for the future of children's healthy development. Also the addition of specialized schools in every school Board to appeal to students with specialized interests, such as athletics and arts, and an increase in the number of apprenticeships points the way to a realistic response to young people's diverse talents and skills (**PCWO Brief, Resolution 1994.4; "Special Education Programs" and PCWO Brief, Resolution 2006.; 'Music in Elementary Schools'**).

In our **2007 Brief**, we also commented on the ever-increasing plight of Post Secondary Student loan debt. While we are aware this is a federal/provincial responsibility, PCWO believes it is an every-increasing issue that requires urgent remedy. (**PCWO Brief: Resolution 2006:6; 'Access to Post Secondary Education'**). A recent study by Statistics Canada shows that adult children age 20-29 continue to live at home with their parents to enable them to complete their education. It has been reported that the best paying jobs are those that demand a degree, but completing a degree program at college or university is very expensive. The economic fall-out from student debt depresses the economy. Yet students know, as do their parents, that without advanced qualifications, leading to employment, independence and contributing to the economy cannot happen. Too many of our young citizens, most from low-income families, despair and drop out of school only to end up in dead-end jobs that do not lead to a secure future for either themselves or their families. Poverty then becomes a way of life that is not easily overcome.

## **HOUSING-LAND USE AND HOMELESSNESS**

PCWO have had strong policy for several years supporting affordable, accessible and appropriate housing for low-income Ontarians. The need for increased availability of affordable housing has been noted in **PCWO Resolutions in 1982; 1988; 1991; 2001.04U; 2004 and 2007**. We consider such housing a necessity, not only because of our climate, but because most of these families

and individuals spend between 40% and 70% of their income on housing. Such a large part of their income spent on housing takes away from money needed for essentials such as food, clothing, transportation and severely limits their health and quality of life. As we explore the reasons for this, we find far too many citizens in this emergency situation due to job loss; illness; lack of employment in spite of knowledge, experience and skills; dissolution of the family home due to marital separation/divorce, to name but a few.

Again in 2008, PCWO has brought to the Government's attention **Resolution 2008:6; THE COST OF CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS** because the special problem of long-term chronic homelessness has not been solved by emergency shelters nor current humanitarian programs. Research has shown that a homeless person can consume an estimated \$100,000 a year in police and court costs, health care and social agency costs, while a small apartment and regular support services can cost approximately \$15,000 a year. As of March 2008, 170,000 households were on waiting lists for affordable housing. With the recent economic down-turn, predictably there will be many more applicants.

PCWO commends the Government on many funding programs that they have brought forth in partnership with the federal and municipal governments. Realistically however, the housing and homeless crisis is still a top priority for too many Ontarians who are fighting the dark effects of poverty. Long waiting lists has created another layer of despair, hopelessness and helplessness for those who lack a place to call 'home'. November 22nd is National Housing Day, and once more PCWO urges the Government to move expeditiously to invest in affordable housing in order to improve the living standards of citizens and build a healthier, inclusive and sustainable society. In our **2001.04 UPDATE entitled "Affordable Housing Crisis"** we urged at that time that the Government commit at least 1% of its annual budget as a housing expenditure to construct and maintain appropriate affordable and adequate housing for Ontario citizens. Our 2008 Resolution urges the Government to work with community leaders and agencies, and other levels of government to provide and fund a long-term plan to reduce chronic homelessness in Ontario.

## **HOME CARE**

PCWO have had policy regarding Home Care since 1997 with our **Resolution 97.5; RESPITE CARE RELIEF FOR CAREGIVERS; in 1999, 99.04; FUNDING AND STANDARDS FOR HOME CARE**, followed by an Update, 2003:01U; **THE NEED FOR HOMEMAKING SERVICES AS PART OF HOME CARE**. We present another Resolution this time **2008:5; THE NEED FOR SUPPORTIVE HOME CARE FOR SENIORS**. As PCWO pointed out in our 2007 Brief, our aging society will require more resources, to maintain and sustain quality of life. As much research has concluded, virtually all seniors, men and women, would prefer to "age in place", in their own familiar homes, if supportive home care and community services were available. While many believe that Long Term Care homes may be necessary sometime, seniors' first option is not to enter one when other help is available. Unfortunately, our current publicly provided home care seems to be a priority for post-hospital acute-care patients. At the same time, many studies have demonstrated that home care is much less costly than long-term care homes. PCWO urges the Government to invest in supportive home care to allow seniors with age-related functional deficits and/or chronic illness to "age in place" by investing in this alternative and expand community services.

## **LONG-TERM CARE HOMES**

PCWO have had policy on Long-term care homes since 1993, **93.1; BEDS FOR LONG-TERM CARE**, at which time PCWO urged the Government to provide more beds "concomitant to pursuing its goal of in-home support for seniors, to

continue to ensure an adequate supply of quality institutional beds with adequate institutional care". A further resolution **2003.3; STAFFING LEVELS AND PRACTICES IN LONG-TERM CARE FACILITIES** urged the Government to increase mandatory staffing levels in long-term care facilities to meet requirements of actual hours of care required by residents; ensure the use of physical restraints in long-term care facilities be critically examined and promote restraint-reduction programs in these facilities. Again in 2004, PCWO updated a resolution **2004U01:04; REGULATION OF NURSING HOMES AND REST AND RETIREMENT HOMES** called for the **REINSTATEMENT** of mandatory hours of nursing care to a minimum of three hours per patient per day in long-term care homes.

In 2008, PCWO updated this once **again 2008:U2; STANDARDS OF CARE IN LONG-TERM CARE FACILITIES** by positing that those residents in long-term care facilities have complex medical problems. Noting that other provinces have raised or are raising their standards of care and the unfortunate rise of violence in long-term care homes which appear to be linked directly to lack of adequate staff, PCWO urged the Government to legislate a mandatory minimum of three and one-half hours of care per patient per day for all residents of Long-Term Care Homes.

PCWO commends the Government for the LONG-TERM CARE HOMES ACT, 2007 which received Royal Assent on June 4, 2007 and that the government's next step was to appoint Shirlee Sharkey to conduct a review which asked for public input. They previously made improvements in staffing of LTC homes. For example, in 2004, the Government set a goal to hire 2000 front-line staff for homes, including 600 new nurses. Since 2004, the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) front-line positions has increased by 4,900 including 1,101 nurses, and the average paid hours of resident care per day (in 2007) was 2.83, which compared favourably to the previous **regulated standard that was eliminated in 1996**. The LTC homes sector were to meet the Government's commitment to add 1,200 new Registered Practical Nurse positions. (Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, August 28, 2007).

In July, 2008, PCWO received Ms. Sharkey's Report, "WHAT WE HEARD: LONG-TERM CARE QUALITY CONSULTATION 2008: A Common Vision of Quality in Ontario Long-Term Care Homes". (This report can be accessed through the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC). Briefly, five themes emerged that were common across the sessions that took place between February 12 and April 10, 2008 in Toronto, Hamilton, Ottawa, London and Sudbury. In total there were 600 participants with up to 60% representing LTC homes and approximately 40% representing the remaining stakeholder groups. (I was present in the February session).

**The five themes are:**

1. Create an environment that promotes quality of life for residents.
2. Make "home" a central part of the nursing home experience for residents and their families.
3. Build a community that supports quality LTC by leveraging partnerships and creating a positive image of LTC for residents and staff.
4. Create a culture of quality care and improvement.
5. Develop leadership, and align incentives and resources to support the quality vision in LTC.

PCWO's response to this report is that the executive summary is excellent in identifying the vision of LTC Homes but does not address any "how to" ideas. In pages 12-14 there are many good ideas but again nothing about the regulations

required to achieve them. There is an assessment tool for quality, but no answer as to who should monitor quality in the LTC Homes. On page 14 there is an expressed need for increased human resources; for educational programs for staff; for training and leadership in the homes; for good equipment and technology. But nothing is reported about how to achieve these ends. A section on funding arrangements stresses the need for flexible funding, to be aligned to the quality of care and to improvement. The Case Mix Index now in use does not work. It lowers funds when residents become more independent. Stability and flexibility are needed in the funding envelope to allow for staffing as needed. Target funding is too limiting. But there is no suggestion of a workable funding formula. No call for hours/patient (PCWO Resolution calls for 3.5 hours) or any other formula. Our Resolution asks for increased levels of funding on a per patient daily basis. PCWO urges the Government yet again to consider our request and look forward to their next steps.

## **EMERGING AND ONGOING ISSUES**

### **ENVIRONMENTAL OVERVIEW**

#### **NUCLEAR POWER**

Since 1956 the provincial Council of Women of Ontario has questioned the safety of nuclear power and over the past several years we have studied this issue and developed policies that reinforce these early concerns. This past year, PCWO became an Intervener in the Ontario power authority's 20 year Integrated Power System Plan (IPSP) hearing before the Ontario Energy Board in order to challenge the OPA's huge reliance on nuclear power rather than far less dangerous, environmentally sustainable alternative forms of energy as well as the very effective method of reducing Ontario's power needs through conservation. The Plan, as it was placed before the OEB earlier this year, had the very real risk of not only drawing Ontario into another 50 year cycle of over-reliance on nuclear power, with all its inherent risks, but of keeping more progressive electricity options from reaching their full potential.

PCWO is therefore pleased that the Minister of Energy, Mr. Smitherman, has directed the OPA to review the IPSP in order to ensure more conservation and renewables are included. As the Minister is aware, other countries are taking advantage of new, less risky, and more innovative strategies featuring renewables such as geothermal, wind and solar, besides conservation incentives and distributed electricity systems. PCWO recognizes that progress is being made by the provincial Energy Conservation Office and that OPA has had good response regarding electricity conservation / demand management (CDM) initiatives. Therefore, PCWO welcomes the Minister's direction to ensure that OPA includes the maximum possible of these kinds of forward looking ways of supplying Ontario's electricity needs. And hope that the potential remains open to dramatically reduce and possibly phase out the use of nuclear power over the next several years.

Additionally, PCWO is very concerned that Ontario Power Generation (OPG) is currently attempting to extend the life of the very dangerous Pickering B Nuclear Plant to the year 2060. PCWO has drawn the Ministry's attention, several times over many years, to Pickering B's proximity to the densely populated Toronto-GTA area; its lack of a sufficiently safe back-up system; the fact that it is aging and near the end of its normal life-cycle; its location over an active geological fault where earthquakes have been increasing in number and intensity. Any accident at Pickering B will cause great economic, social and environmental

damage. PCWO urges the government to close Pickering B to avoid these unnecessary risks.

## **WASTE MANAGEMENT**

PCWO is most pleased that the Minister of Environment, Mr. Gerretsen, has asked for comments on a new waste management strategy that features a 'zero waste' philosophy. In this way Ontario will join a growing number of jurisdictions world-wide that are moving expeditiously to encourage waste reduction on a far larger scale than previously thought possible. For several years PCWO has supported waste reduction as the best method of dramatically lowering environmental damage to our land, water and air, and has recognized that individuals must be encouraged to take responsibility for reducing their consumption and producers must take responsibility for their products over a lifetime.

At the same time, we have opposed old-style landfills and incineration. PCWO is therefore supportive of continued Environmental Assessments for land fills, but very disappointed that proposed incinerators are subject only to an environmental "screening" review. This latter decision ignores the very real contaminant fallout onto air, soil and water when incinerator equipment fails to operate properly, and the fact that extremely small nano-particles emitted from incinerators may go deep into the lungs and can do considerable damage. As well, toxic fly ash and some bottom ash has to be kept safe in special land fills, at high cost, and there is additionally the cumulative build-up of contaminants in the soil to consider.

## **PESTICIDES**

PCWO has long-term policies regarding the need to ban the cosmetic use of pesticides and at various times have requested the Government to pass legislation to phase them out, or, to legislate an enabling law that would allow Municipalities to pass their own by-laws to ban the cosmetic use of pesticides on private property in urban areas.

We are therefore pleased and commend the Government for enacting the legislation to allow it to ban a wide spectrum of pesticides, in response to warnings of medical experts and groups such as the Ontario College of Family Physicians and the Canadian Cancer Society. They have documented the growing evidence of the harm pesticides do, particularly to children, the elderly, and those with compromised immune systems.

We further urge the Government to include the widely-used 2,4-D on this list to ensure that Municipalities, such as Toronto, be allowed to take advantage of the Supreme Court ruling on the Hudson case, that lets Municipalities enact pesticide bans in order to better protect the health and welfare of their residents.

## **SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

### **Social Assistance**

Provincial Council of Women of Ontario commends the Government for its determination to have a long-term plan to eradicate poverty. For many years PCWO has urged successive governments to do so, as we are well aware of the devastating impact poverty has on families, children and single unemployable persons. And despite many small and incremental improvements, such as the 7% increase to date (since 2003) in social assistance rates, and the flow-through of the increases to the Canada Child Tax Benefit Supplement, the incomes of those Ontarians receiving social assistance remain well below the poverty line as measured by Statistics Canada and others.

PCWO commends the Government for their plan to 'upload' the cost of all welfare benefits from Municipalities (which now pay 20% of the cost) by 2018. This agreement between municipalities and the province is a welcome development and is a significant step toward fairness to cities. Taking back these costs endorses an important principle in that income support programs are best paid through the income and sales taxes, not through property taxes. In addition, the Government will also 'upload' the annual bill pressed onto municipalities for court security and transporting prisoners. The unfortunate aspect is, this will not happen until 2010 for the welfare shift and 2012 to start on the court cost savings. This is due to the current economic outlook. However, they have indicated that when the economy does improve, the rollout could be accelerated. There has been no agreement reached on other contentious issues, which are draining taxpayers, such as the enormous social housing costs.

### **Temporary-Care Assistance**

Temporary-care assistance was established to help cover some of the extraordinary costs of raising children when their parents are unable or unwilling to do so. But grandparents who have established a more permanent living arrangement with their grandchildren-being granted custody and having demonstrated intent to treat the child as their own-have been denied financial assistance. The temporary-care assistance provided financial support (\$231 a month for the first child and \$188 a month each for additional children) and helped to defray costs such as dental care and eyeglasses, food, clothing and other costs of living.

Most of the grandparents who have stepped up to keep their families together are either retired or close to being so. Some lived on extremely limited incomes and have even remortgaged their homes and cashed out RRSPs to cover the unanticipated costs of raising children. The Government's suggestion that these grandparents should apply for welfare if their financial difficulties became that dire is not helpful. The reality is that many grandparents who own a home or have RRSPs but limited incomes would not qualify for welfare.

These grandparents serve as "unexpected foster parents" yet real foster parents receive \$900 a month per child in their care from the province, while grandparents are receiving no financial help, needs urgent attention. PCWO's resolution 79.7 Foster Homes; urged the government to make the allowance to foster parents more nearly commensurate with the responsibility and expense involved in this valuable community service to children. We believe that the system needs to be adjusted so that this same allowance can be granted to "unexpected foster parents" for the children in their full-time care.

## **JUSTICE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

According to statistics the rate of harassment and sexual assault continues to rise and women continue to not report, citing fear of police investigation and shame as the main reason. Thus, it is alarming, not just discouraging that when courageous women do report such harassment in the workplace, their pleas are ignored or even denied. Even worse that some women are murdered.

Legislation to provide workplace protections from sexual harassment and domestic violence has been brought forward 5 times since 2001, including **Private Members Bills in 2001, (Bill 78), 2003 (Bill 55), 2004 (Bill 126) and 2005 (Bills 35 and 45).**

PCWO have two resolutions on workplace violence; **98.7; SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN THE WORKPLACE** that "urged the Government to designate as a workplace hazard under Ontario Health and Safety Act and other legislation..." In 2007, **2007:6; PSYCHOLOGICAL HARASSMENT IN THE WORKPLACE** that stated that all workers have the right to a workplace that is free of psychological harassment and urged the Government to create and implement legislation on psychological harassment in the workplace.

Sexual and psychological harassment is a significant and widespread occupational health and safety hazard for women in the workplace. In the fall of 2007, including sexual harassment in the Occupational Health and Safety Act was one of the many jury recommendations of the inquests into the deaths of Theresa Vince and Lori Dupont. PCWO urges the Government to pass this legislation without further delay.

## **HEALTH CONCERNS**

### **HOSPITAL INFECTIONS**

A report from Ontario's auditor general has revealed that only 28% of doctors, in 10 hospitals surveyed, washed their hands between examining patients. That was following a pilot program aimed at improving hand-washing practices; before that, the rate was an abysmal 18%. Hand-washing is the single most important factor stopping the spread of infectious diseases and preventing outbreaks in health-care facilities. Almost all the province's 103 hospitals - 99% - have a formal hand-washing policy, reports the Canadian Institute for Health Information( CIHI) , but only 38% audit to make sure that it is working . The ministry of Health will require Ontario to monitor and report compliance with their policy, starting in April 2009.

### **C.difficile**

Cdifficile bacteria commonly live in both human and animal gastro-intestinal tracts. Though it can exist in healthy people , it can become dominant in the bowels of people on antibiotics, chemotherapy or those with weakened immune systems. Causing no symptoms in healthy people, it can make others sick and even cause death. Hand-washing is a standard requirement for hospital visitors. In Ontario, the Government says it is primarily the responsibility of hospitals, not the ministry, to address C.difficile.

The epidemic strain, NAP1, began its Ontario rampage in 2006, after 2000 people died in Quebec. Mandatory reporting, of a minimum of six cases occurring in hospitals, was brought in on 30 September 2008. Since 2006, C.difficile has caused the death of 264 patients in seven hospitals ( Hamilton Spectator, June 2008). 62 deaths occurred at Jo Brant hospital in Burlington. Experts in Quebec and Great Britain warn that this superbug strain needs specific controls, for it grows stronger as it spreads. Common issues include hospital overcrowding, staffing shortages, underfunding and lack of education for health care workers and the public about the lethal properties of the epidemic strain of C.difficile. On 1 November 2008, Grand River, a Kitchener hospital experienced an outbreak. PCWO is monitoring this and other health related issues.

## **FOOD SECURITY**

### **LISTERIOSIS OUTBREAK**

In the summer of 2008, Ontarions were confused and shocked by the announcement that, for some, their cold-meat supplies were contaminated and

an urgent recall of these foods claimed front-page news for weeks. The food – borne listeriosis raised much anxiety; linked to the deaths of 20 people it was traced back to one federally-regulated meat plant in Toronto.

Reports tried to reassure the population by stating that the risk posed by listeriosis was very low for most people. Healthy people exposed to the bacteria are rarely affected. But, they warned, there is a potential risk to pregnant women, seniors, young children and people with weakened immune systems. It was somewhat interestingly reported that these same meats were routinely pasteurized for export., eliminating the listeriosis risk. Why not for local consumption? No one knows!. The source was eventually discovered to be an unclean meat grinding machine in the meat processing plant. For many people who rely on their governments' food inspections, many questions are left along with a feeling of insecurity in their food choices.

At this time, it appears that self-policing of these resources has not changed. There are questions remaining about mandatory product recalls, the importation of dangerous products and protection of the population which can be addressed by adopting the main tenants of the Consumer Product Safety Act into law.

### **E.COLI**

This is another potential risk to citizens that has eluded containment. People who fall seriously ill from E.coli poisoning are at a sharply higher risk for permanent kidney disease; the conclusion of a landmark seven-year study of victims of Canada's tainted water tragedy. That outbreak in Walkerton killed seven people and made 2,500 very ill; many now chronically. In 2006, Hershey chocolate products were recalled over fears of possible salmonella contamination. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) is still investigating this case and, in their advisory, reported that these chocolate products can still be found in a small number of independent stores, recently in Hamilton, in spite of an intensive recall process. E.coli has also affected many consumers of hamburgers in North bay. There are now new outbreaks of E.coli O157 in Halton and Niagara under investigation. All public health inspections are analyzing samples. Ontarions are warned that the number of cases is expected to continue to rise. Once again, it seems that people must be responsible for their own safety in food consumption and there are many reasons why this may not be possible.

As an example, the World Health Organization (WHO), in 2004, pointed out that social conditions in which people powerfully influence their chances to be healthy. Indeed, factors such as poverty, food security, social exclusion, discrimination, poor housing, unhealthy early-childhood conditions and low occupational status are important determinants of most of disease , death and health inequalities between and within countries.

PCWO will be monitoring food security issues closely. However, promotion of healthy living conditions and chronic disease prevention are predicated on the ability of individuals and communities to make healthy choices. Therefore, it is crucial that people be empowered to improve the quality of life for themselves, their families and society.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Provincial Council of Women of Ontario would like to thank the Government of Ontario for the opportunity to present its views and to discuss them with members and staff. As a non-partisan group with a long history of working to

improve the lives of Ontarians, we are fortunate to have access to policy decision-makers. We urge the Government to consider our views carefully. They are developed through a long, involved, consultation process that results in policies that are both timely and relevant. Many of us have witnessed changes in policy due to, in part perhaps, to some of our effort over the last 85 years. This both inspires and motivates PCWO members to participate as citizens toward the betterment of conditions pertaining to family, community and society.

## **PCWO BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

### **President: Thelma McGillivray, BA, BSW, MSW**

Thelma McGillivray was elected President of PCWO in 2007. Thelma has a BA in political science and BSW, McMaster University, MSW, Wilfrid Laurier University, and Certification in Mediation, University of Toronto. Thelma's work experience has been in Children and Family Services, Mental Health Service, Unified Family Court and Private Family Practice. Thelma has volunteered for 30 years in various local community, provincial and national non-profit organizations. As a member of Council of Women, Thelma has been active at all levels, local, provincial and the national. She has held leadership roles as President of the Hamilton and District Council of Women, Past Chair of the Status of Women Advisory Committee for the City of Hamilton, Current Member of the Status of Women (2006-2010) and the Senior Advisory Committee (2006-2010) Past President of Burlington University Women, Past Chair of the Older Womens' Network, and past Board member of the Elizabeth Fry Society; and the Ontario Coalition of Senior Organizations Ontario. Currently, Thelma is Convenor for Senior Issues on the National Council of Women and has attended three International Council of Women Triennials (Finland; Australia and Ukraine). Thelma is an appointed member of the New Horizons Senior Review Committee for Ontario. Thelma was honoured as the Woman of the Year in Communications (1992) from the City of Hamilton and the Mayor of Hamilton and Mayor of Burlington's Award for Volunteerism.

### **Treasurer: Marnie Sherritt, B.A.**

Marnie Sherritt is treasurer of PCWO. Marnie has been a member of the London Council for many years. She serves as its treasurer. As well Marnie has volunteered on many community organizations, such as, Council for London Seniors, Seniors Community Association, Transportation Committee, Community Safety and Crime Prevention Advisory Committee for the City of London, and the Deafness Advisory Committee. As a member of CFUW London, Marnie has served on the Finance Committee and the Constitution Committee. In addition Marnie is a member of the Western Fair Association and the London Curling Club, and the Thames Valley Children's Centre Auxiliary.

### **Secretary: Mary Potter, BSc**

Mary Potter is Past-Treasurer and now secretary of PCWO. Mary holds a Bachelor of Household Science and has spent most of her life in volunteer work. She is a Past-President of the Social Planning Research Council of St. Catharines & Thorold; the St. Catharines and District Council of Women, and the Friends of Malcolmson Eco-Park. On the National Council of Women of Canada, Mary has been Vice-President, Constitution Convenor and is currently Resolutions Convenor. Mary is a member of several naturalist groups in the Niagara Region and served as membership secretary for the Peninsular Field Naturalists.

**Vice-President Resolutions: Luba Podolsky, BA, M.Ed.**

Luba Podolsky is Vice-President of Resolutions for PCWO. Luba holds a B.A. from McMaster University, and a M.Ed. from the University of Ottawa. Luba's work experience included Microbiology at St. Joseph's Hospital in Hamilton and Laboratory of Hygiene in Ottawa. Luba taught secondary school science, mainly biology, in Ottawa. Her volunteer activities include the Research Institute of the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario in genetic research. She is an active volunteer in the Ukrainian Orthodox Church and Council of Women at the local and provincial levels. Luba has held many positions including V.P. Education, V.P. Health, V.P. Resolutions for PCWO. She participates in the Health and Social Welfare Committees of the Ottawa Council of Women, and their representative to the Community Advisory Committee at The Ottawa Hospital.

**Vice-President Environment: Carol Canzona, BA, MLSc**

Carole Canzona is Vice President of Environment for PCWO. Carol graduated with a B.A. from the U of Toronto and a Master of Library Science degree from the U of Western Ontario. Carol has held positions with Council of Women; a past-president of London Council; a past-president of PCWO; a past V.P of the National Council; past-president of the Toronto Council and currently the convenor for Environment for Toronto Council. She is a Life Member of both London, PCWO, NCWC and CFUW London. Carol's past career was in Public Welfare, Bell Canada and the YWCA.

**Vice-President Health: Beverlee McIntosh, MSW**

Beverlee McIntosh is Vice-President of Health for PCWO. She is also the Chair of the Health Committee of the Ottawa Council of Women. Beverlee holds a Masters of Social Work and has worked in hospital and mental health settings for over 20 years. Beverlee is now retired. She is an active member of the Ontario Association of Social Workers (Gerontology Advisory) and the Canadian Coalition of Caregivers and has a strong interest in advocacy especially in the area of Health Services for seniors and support for their family caregivers.

**Vice-President Housing and Land-Use: Sheila Pepper, B.A.**

Sheila Pepper is Vice-President of Housing and Land-Use for PCWO. She has served on all levels of Council over the years. On the National level as V.P. Administration/Finance/Health and Social Issues. Convenor of Membership/Physical Education and Recreation. On the Ottawa Council, past-president, V.P. Health and Public Safety and represents Ottawa on the Social Welfare Community Council. As a member of CFUW, Sheila held the position of Co-Secretary, Advocacy and Membership. Other organizations, are Council on Aging, Women's Business Network, and Habitat. Sheila has attended International Council of Women Triennials (Australia and Ukraine).

**Vice-President Status of Women: May Toth, BA, MNsc**

May Toth is Vice-President of the Status of Women for PCWO. May trained in nursing-midwifery in Scotland. She furthered her education and holds a BA in nursing from Queens University and a Masters in Nurse Sciences from Boston University. May added to her education with Certificates from Emergency Management Ontario. She has taught courses at McMaster University and in nursing schools in Kingston and Toronto and has been employed in nursing administration. May has been a long time member of the Hamilton & District Council of Women and Multicultural organizations and environment.

**Vice-President Seniors: Barbro Stalbecker-Pountney, BA, LLB**

Barbro is Vice-President of Seniors for PCWO. Admitted to the Ontario Bar in 1975, Barbro practiced law in Hanover, Ontario, in Toronto as Editor and Publisher of Carswell Legal Publishing Co., and carried a part-time law practice.

She returned to full-time in 1992, and has added teaching in Estate Law at Humber College. A volunteer for many organizations, such as C.A.S., Mental Health, past-president of Scandinavian Canadian Business Assoc., the Canadian Bar Association on both provincial and national levels. Barbro is past-co-chair of the Older Women's Network and past-chair of OWN's Communication Committee.

**Newsletter & Website: Shirley Browne**

Shirley Browne is Vice-President of Communications for PCWO. Shirley graduated with her teaching credentials from England and has lived in England, Jamaica, Burundi, Togo, and Quebec. Settling in Ottawa, she brings a vast knowledge of socio-cultural conditions from many parts of the world. Shirley is an active member and past president of the Ottawa Council of Women and past president of the PCWO and has held many positions with NCWC, currently as Archivist, representative to HEAL (Health Action Lobby) and QUELCC (Quality End-of-Life Care Coalition). Shirley has been active in her community as a Board member of the James St. Rehabilitation Centre for Addicted Teenagers and a volunteer House Mother of that program; Chair of the Centretown Churches Social Action Committee and Chair of St. Barnabas Outreach Committee, which, apart from local community activities, has been working with several Rwandan refugee families in Canada, Africa and Holland as well as a school for street children in Afghanistan..

**Vice-President Liaison: Jacqueline Truax, ECE**

Jacqueline Truax is Vice-President as Liaison for PCWO. Jacqueline graduated from Seneca College and was a ECE teacher. Active with her church, Jacqueline volunteers with seniors. Jacqueline is a Past President for PCWO and has been an active member of the Toronto and Area Council of Women serving on many committees.

**Archives: Mary Lemyre:** Mary has been an active Council member for years and is co-president of the Toronto Council.

