

**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**

251658240



Mary Potter, President

Gracia Janes, Vice President Resolutions

**The Hon. David Onley
Lieutenant Governor of Ontario
Honorary President, Provincial Council of Women of Ontario**

November 2011

BRIEF TO THE GOVERNMENT OF ONTARIO

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 & District Council of Women

London and Area Council of Women

Ottawa Council of Women

St. Catharines & District Council of Women

Toronto & Area Council of Women

PROVINCIALY ORGANIZED SOCIETIES

Association of Early Childhood Educators - Ontario

Business and Professional Women's Clubs of Ontario

Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario

Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association

Ontario Dental Hygienists' Association

Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation

Ontario Women's Liberal Commission

Polish Alliance Ladies Circle Central Executive

Polish Canadian Women's Federation

Salvation Army - Ontario Central Division

Ukrainian Women's Association of Canada – Eastern Executive

PREAMBLE

The Provincial Council of Women of Ontario (PCWO) is pleased to present its 2011 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 88th Brief presented to the Government of Ontario. Over the past decades the PCWO has been a leader in bringing the Government's attention to matters of concern to many Ontarians.

Established in 1923, as an affiliate of the National Council of Women (1893) the aim of the Council is to work for the betterment of conditions pertaining to family, community and society. PCWO is composed of 5 Local Councils and 11 Provincially Organized Societies.

This year, PCWO will be available on Monday, November 21 from 1:30 to 4:00 p.m. and Tuesday, November 22 from 12:30 to 3:00 p.m. 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 RESOLUTIONS PROCESS

PCWO speaks only on policies approved by the membership through the resolutions 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 discussed by 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. The grassroots process, following basic democratic principles, produces policies that PCWO can act upon.

The resolutions in this Brief were approved at the 2011 AGM which was held in Ottawa in April, for presentation to the Government of Ontario.

PROVINCIAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN OF ONTARIO 2011 RESOLUTIONS

#1 HEALTH-RELATED FOOD COSTS FOR SOCIAL ASSISTANCE RECIPIENTS

Whereas #1 in 2005, the changes made by the Ministry of Community and Social Services to the funding of health-related food costs of Social Assistance recipients through its new Special Diet Allowance resulted in the exclusion of many medical conditions and reduced the funding allowed for recipients; and

Whereas #2 in 2010 the Human Rights Commission found the Government's 2005 changes to the special diet allowance "discriminatory", and violated the Ontario Human Rights Code; and

Whereas #3 the Ministry has recently implemented some of the recommendations of the Ministry- established Special Diets Expert Review Committee 2008 report , adding some medical conditions to the Special Diets list and removing others, stipulating that only the costs for one condition per recipient will be funded and rarely allowing funding that comes close to the allowable limit of \$250; and

Whereas #4 the Special diets Review Committee pointed out the "extraordinary costs" of special diets and the added difficulties people in northern and remote communities face in accessing foods to meet health needs, and the Special Diet funding formula has not changed to reflect the costs of inflation since 2005; therefore be it

Resolved #1 that the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario adopt as policy, that all social assistance recipients, with health-related dietary needs receive adequate Special Diet Allowances; and be it further

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

- a) ensure that through the Program, social assistance recipients who have extra costs due to health conditions receive the additional monetary support they need for dietary purposes, particularly those living in remote and northern communities
- b) ensure that the Nutritional Supplement Program is not discriminatory, according to the Human Rights Code.

#2 ACCESS TO HOSPITAL CARE IN RURAL AND NORTHERN ONTARIO

Whereas # 1 hospitals play a unique role in the social and economic fabric of small communities a) providing a priority public service for residents, b) providing a core of professional jobs, and c) attracting investors and industries who consider access to hospital care a priority for locating a business; and

Whereas # 2 communities across Ontario have struggled for generations to build and sustain their local hospitals through extraordinary community generosity and bequests to their local facility; and

Whereas # 3 ill-considered and inadequately evaluated cuts to rural northern hospitals are ignoring the basic tenets of Medicare, undoing decades of effort to build services, while failing to recognize that rural hospitals can be efficient in their operating costs; and

Whereas #4 cuts to rural hospitals have seriously affected access to care through unacceptable increases in ambulance response time in rural areas, and in the cost of ambulance transfers paid for by municipalities, as well as through increased costs and hardship to patients when they must travel to larger centres for basic medical treatments formerly available at a local hospital; and

Whereas # 5 rural hospitals have experienced continual service cuts through government policies which are urban-centred and which do not fit the requirements of the unique population demographics and geographic conditions of rural and northern residents; therefore be it

Resolved # 1 that the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario (PCWO) adopt as policy that rural and northern hospitals be considered an essential service in the delivery of health care in Ontario and should be funded accordingly; and be it further

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

- a) create a policy to ensure appropriate services are available in every hospital, including in rural and northern hospitals, and
- b) set a baseline level of expected hospital services for communities, and
- c) create a provincial standard to provide at least baseline hospital services at a reasonable travelling time from residents' homes, and
- d) support hospitals in developing partnerships with medical and nursing schools to bring interns, residents and nurses to Northern and rural hospitals, and

- e) place a moratorium on closures of emergency departments until they can ensure that all residents can reach emergency departments of hospitals in a reasonable travel time from their homes.

#3 ADEQUATE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Whereas # 1 there are not enough Special Education programs, Educational Assistants, or supports for teachers with children with special needs in a regular classroom, due to a lack of funding; and

Whereas #2 there is an increase in the number of children with autism, developmental and/or emotional problems, as well as children without a working knowledge of one of Canada's two official languages; and

Whereas #3 all children deserve to be provided with a public education program that meets their needs; therefore be it

Resolved #1 that Provincial Council of Women of Ontario adopt as policy that all children with special needs receive an effective public school program; and that there be a Provincial Ombudsman to advocate for children whose educational needs are not being met, and

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

- a) emergency funds to ensure that all schools are able to provide children with special needs with programs that meet their immediate needs, and
- b) an annual funding increase to ensure programs can be maintained; and,
- c) the appointment of a Provincial Ombudsman to advocate for children whose educational needs are not being met.

#4 COMBATING HUMAN SEXUAL TRAFFICKING

Whereas #1 human sexual trafficking is world-wide criminal activity which is making significant inroads into Ontario and other parts of Canada, through the activities of several criminal groups, and

Whereas #2 government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are not trained to identify and provide appropriate trauma care that is critical to a victim to rebuild her/his life, and

Whereas #3 the process of converting a victim into a witness is volatile and intense as generally victims do not recognize the benefits of co-operating with authorities, and

Whereas #4 the long prosecution and sentencing process is an obstruction for a victim to rebuild her or his life, the judicial system needs to review its process so as not to deny a victim the opportunity to rehabilitate her/his life in a timely fashion; therefore be it

Resolved #1 that the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario adopt as policy the need for an integrated government plan to combat sexual trafficking in persons and to provide funding for services for victims and for those providing assistance to victims.

Resolved #2 that the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario urge the Government of Ontario to develop an integrated action plan that will:

- a) acknowledge the reality that human sexual trafficking, by criminal groups is present in Ontario.
- b) provide funding for NGOs for programming and support to the victims of sexual trafficking.
- c) allow the judicial system to make human sexual trafficking charges a priority and victim -focused.
- d) bring together NGOs to share best practices to develop a provincial protocol to assist a victim of human sexual trafficking.
- e) appoint a designated person to address all issues involved with human sexual trafficking .
- f) convene a Training Advisory Committee to :
 - i) develop and launch a curriculum and training project on human sexual trafficking for front line workers to increase their capacity, as 'first' responders, to identify, provide support and protections and where to make appropriate referrals
 - ii) educate on how pornography fuels human sexual trafficking
 - iii) provide and make available educational material on the consequences of human sexual trafficking training for local police forces in identifying, how to serve them and how offenders to justice.

UPDATE: REGULATION OF RETIREMENT HOMES IN ONTARIO

Whereas #1 in Resolution 90.7, PCWO urged the Province of Ontario to establish operating standards for Retirement Homes; in Update #1 in 2001 PCWO urged the government to set up a Task Force to make recommendations on basic standards of care, criteria for licensing, enforcement and complaints procedures and standards for Care Home information packages; and in 2004 Update #1 urged that conditions for licensing and maintaining be reviewed, updated and enforced, and that facilities pass annual unannounced inspections, with the results readily available to the public; and

Whereas #2 Retirement Homes have not been regulated until now by the Province of Ontario; and

Whereas #3 there have been unfortunate cases of abuse or neglect of some seniors in these Homes; and

Whereas #4 the care, safety, comfort, independence and well-being of seniors is an important objective of the Government of Ontario, especially as the proportion of seniors in the population of Ontario is projected to increase rapidly in the next decade; and

Whereas #5 the Government of Ontario enacted Parts I and II of the Retirement Homes Act 2010, on June 8th, 2010 and is now drafting regulations to come into effect in 2011 along with the remainder of the Act; therefore be it

Resolved #1 that the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario adopt as policy the need for adequate legislation and regulations to ensure the care, safety, comfort, independence and well-being of seniors living in Retirement Homes;

Resolved #2 that the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario urge the Government of Ontario to ensure that where the Retirement Homes provide professional health care services, the regulations ensure that:

- a) The care provided by Retirement Homes is commensurate with the individual need of each senior
- b) That for each new resident permanently residing in the Retirement Home, a plan of care is drawn up in close consultation with the senior and her/his substitute decision-maker, if any, within 14 days of arrival
- c) That this plan is reviewed and renewed after any major medical change in condition;

Resolved #3 that residents have full access to all services provided by the Community Care Access Centre of their Local Health Integration Network and are able to use these services at no additional cost, so that residents do not have to pay privately for health services that are publicly provided by the Ontario Health Insurance Plan;

Resolved #4 that, where Retirement homes provide professional health care services, for example for residents suffering from dementia:

- a) physical and drug restraints be allowed only in Homes that are licensed to have a full time R.N. or physician on premises or on call 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, and that these qualified staff are on premises at any time these restraints are in use
- b) Retirement Homes that do not have such professional contracted services available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, not be licensed to use these restraints;

Resolved #5

- a) that the complaint process for residents be simple, quick and straightforward to obtain remedial action
- b) that investigation take place immediately upon receipt of unresolved complaints
- c) that residents be protected from retaliation by staff and/or by owners of the Home, upon presentation and follow-up of the complaint.

ONTARIO WOMEN'S HEALTH FRAMEWORK

ECHO: Improving Women's Health in Ontario, have produced a document called Ontario Women's Health Framework, which has drawn on information in the POWER Study (Project for an Ontario Women's Health Evidence Based Report) and included key partners who play a leadership role in women's health. They are urging the Ontario Government through its health and social support systems to take actions that recognize women's perspectives and address their differences.

The *Framework* has established three priorities for improving women's health:

1. Reducing gendered health inequities resulting from women's social roles and status;
2. Designing and implementing care delivery systems that strengthen the reliability and quality of care;
3. Mandating planning and accountability requirements that reflect the priorities of women.

As a partner in the Ontario Women's Health Framework, we are anxious to have the Government adopt the recommendations in the report. We have advocated many of the recommendations over the years and have renewed optimism that they will be implemented.

Besides looking after the health of their families, women are predominant employees in health care services and it is therefore important that women remain healthy to continue in their caregiver roles.

Women's symptoms and responses to treatment are sometimes different than men's, in diseases, such as heart disease and AIDS, and so it is important that these differences be recognized in diagnostic procedures, and that women take part in clinical trials to evaluate medications.

It is also important to recognize the social determinants of women's health such as violence, poor housing, and poverty. Violence can affect both their physical and mental health. (We point out that aboriginal women and girls are subjected to more than their share of violence on and off reserve.) Poor housing can lead to health problems with drafts, mould or excess heat. Poverty reduces their ability to buy healthy food.

We hope that this report will mobilize action on health initiatives for all Ontario women and especially those who are disadvantaged.

ECHO is an agency of the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care. The Ontario Women's Health Framework was launched on June 22, 2011 in Toronto.

ONGOING ISSUES

ENVIRONMENT

Green Energy Act

The Provincial Council of Women of Ontario (PCWO) supports the Green Energy and Economy Act as an excellent plan to move Ontario forward into a more sustainable and environmentally protective era, with the added benefit of creating thousands of jobs. Nevertheless, PCWO again cautions that the domination of the transmission lines in southwestern Ontario by nuclear reactors at the Bruce, has stalled the hook-ups of many hundreds of farms, and other potential green energy suppliers, to the system. As well, given the rapid variations of subsidies for the 'Standard Offer'/ Feed-in Tariff program and the growing problems of siting green energy installations, and hence uncertainty for manufacturers, suppliers, buyers and distributors, there is definitely a need for consistent policy and programs. This will enable companies, particularly local ones, that manufacture renewable technology equipment, to stabilize their operations and maintain and grow the many predicted and possible jobs.

Provincial Draft 20 Year Electricity Plan

PCWO has commented extensively over many years regarding the Province's plans for too much nuclear power and the need to instead phase it out due to its extraordinarily prohibitive costs, the lack of a solution to the nuclear waste problem, which is building steadily. Most importantly, it should be phased out because of the many dangers to human health and the environment. Also, in the case of a potential human error, natural catastrophe, or malevolent act, it will be detrimental to the economy of southern Ontario. With all this in mind, as well as the disaster at Fukushima, PCWO again speaks out strongly against the Provincial plans to build new nuclear reactors at Darlington, OPG's application to build a low and medium level non-fuel nuclear waste dump on the shores of Lake Huron and any extension of the life of the Pickering nuclear reactors. Regarding the Government's 2010 Directive to the Ontario Power Authority that its '*Draft Supply Mix*' must have a fixed target of 50% nuclear power, PCWO once more warns the Government that this will cap solid growth of the far more environmentally sustainable options of energy conservation and efficiencies, renewables, and ancillary use of natural gas in providing combined heat and power (CHP) as envisioned in the Green Energy Act.

Protection of the Great Lakes

PCWO has long supported the protection of the Great Lakes as an irreplaceable resource serving many millions of people around their shores. We have attended meetings and commented on a variety of initiatives such as the Great Lakes Charter

Annex Agreements and most recently the Canada/US negotiations on the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement. We draw the government's attention to the ever-growing threats to these precious resources, such as climate change, invasive species, urban sprawl, water diversions, industrial releases, tritiated water releases from nuclear reactors, new planned nuclear reactors at Darlington, the potential for releases of radioactive elements from the transport of nuclear waste on the Great Lakes and along the St. Lawrence River and the planned medium and low-level nuclear waste dump on the shores of Lake Huron.

PCWO is also gravely concerned, that in the current economic climate the chemical, petroleum and nuclear industries and others which have had an abysmal track record of polluting the Great Lakes, will advocate for looser regulations for the sake of much needed jobs. It is our view however that healthy Great Lakes make a healthy economy.

Therefore, PCWO was pleased when the Government recently announced a promised Great Lakes Protection Act and, should this be enacted, we urge the Government to keep in mind all of our above noted concerns. However, PCWO is disappointed that the Government has yet to bring into force the 2009 recommendations of the Ontario Drinking Water Advisory Commission (ODWAC) to reduce the annual average tritium releases from nuclear plants, all sited on the shores of Great Lakes Ontario and Huron, from 7,000 bequerels per litre to 20 bequerels per litre. Even this latter level is too high when drinking water sources are close to very large accidental releases of tritiated water.

Quarries

PCWO has long standing policy regarding ground water protection and share the concerns of the Ministry of Environment regarding the "*shallow water table*" in the area where the Highland Companies have applied for a Class A licence Quarry Below Water to excavate aggregate from a quarry 937.1 hectares (2,300 acres) in size. It will have unlimited annual tonnage, and is on prime farmland in Malmur Township, next to the Niagara Escarpment. PCWO policies also support the protection of prime farmland, and in this case, a significant amount of prime farmland would be destroyed, something that agricultural groups, such as the North Dufferin Agricultural Community Task Force, are strenuously opposed to. We commend the government for making this application subject to a complete Environmental Assessment as we and many others requested of the Premier this past summer.

Incineration

PCWO is strongly opposed to incineration/gasification of municipal waste and wholeheartedly supports a 'Zero Waste' policy plan. Therefore we very much regret the apparent abandonment of the Waste Diversion Act reform and Zero Waste plan, and concurrently, the "lack of an automatic full Environmental Assessment of municipal plans for incinerators such as the Durham /York energy- from- waste facility. This incinerator will have many down sides, such as releases of unacceptable levels of mercury, lead, cadmium and other toxic emissions and the fine particulate matter that evades the best of screening and goes deep into the lungs. Part of the reason for the

closure of coal fired plants, is to reduce such pollutants, so it makes no sense to encourage the building of such municipal incinerators. Proponents of incineration point to their ability to create electricity for the grid, however the lost energy from the manufacture of products that are burned is close to equal to that created in the process. As well, burning waste runs completely counter to the 3R focused "Zero Waste" strategy, as the more municipal burning, the less product to recycle. When the incinerator builder (often private sector) contracts with a municipality for the set amount of waste needed to "feed" the incinerator, it draws products for recycling such as plastics and paper (the best burners) out of the waste stream. The more the public relies on the very expensive burning of products, the less ability they and the Province have to move along a waste-reduction path.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Provincial Council of Women is pleased that our newly elected government will be a strong voice when it comes time to re-negotiate the Canada Health Act with the Federal Government of the Canada. While maintaining an efficient and compassionate health care is a priority, especially for the aging population in Ontario, citizens are also concerned that the cost of the system be transparent and accountable to taxpayers. Decades of cost cutting to support poor management of our health care system have taken its toll. Allowing Private-for-profit agencies into the public system has clearly not been the panacea anticipated by a government looking for an easy fix. While the LHINS model of health care delivery has potential to provide better supervision and cost control, as we experienced in some LHINS, the model is also open to mismanagement and lack of accountability. We hope this government will tweak the model to make it work throughout the province as it was intended. PCWO has called the previous government for an audit of the LHINS model to clarify if money is being saved [or wasted] by this administrative system.

We hope to see this government commit to its promised increased funding for front line personal support workers in homecare. Their work is stressful and underpaid, in part due to previous government decisions to contract these services out to the lowest bidder. We strongly support this government's innovative and forward looking plan to redesign Ontario's primary care to provide citizens with better access to doctors and health care professionals. We hope that this includes the strengthening of a system of family health care teams and community health care centres which provide the most comprehensive model of health care for Ontarians and gives us the most value for our tax dollars. In particular we hope to see the more effective use of Nurse Practitioners in the new model of public health.

Within the resolutions passed at our 2011 Annual Meeting is the underlying concern that hospital funding is set too low to protect existing services and access, both in large urban hospitals, which are overcrowded with ALC patients, and in rural and remote communities whose hospitals are being closed to create financial efficiencies but leaving these communities virtually without secondary care and unrealistic tertiary

health care options. We beseech this government to protect the health care services in rural and small communities.

Finally PCWO is concerned that regulations to protect vulnerable seniors in Retirement Home facilities be passed quickly and that a review of the effectiveness of these regulations be undertaken before this government's term is expired. Previous provincial governments stripped communities of subsidized institutional care known as "Homes for the Aged" for frail elderly who required light supervision but not "nursing home level of care". This opened the market for private retirement homes, only affordable to the wealthy elderly. Nevertheless, having money to pay for care does not guarantee that rights are respected. The retirement home industry is providing care [for profit] which would otherwise be available through the public health care system in LTC facilities. Especially we are concerned about the 'locked units' for advanced dementia care in these private homes as well as about the double standard of providing publicly funded homecare services for some elderly but not for those who are in retirement homes and who are expected to pay from their own pockets for services received free to eligible seniors in their own homes.

HOUSING

Long Term Housing Strategy

PCWO has long advocated for a broad range of government action to meet housing needs - from support of cooperative housing in 1983, to recognition of the lack of affordable housing as a Provincial emergency in 1988, to the necessity of a long term housing strategy in 1991. Therefore, PCWO commends the Government for its recently introduced Bill 140 - a long term affordable housing strategy

There is a long standing absence of adequate Federal and Provincial housing investments or a comprehensive Provincial housing policy, while ever-growing numbers of Ontarians - now numbering 627,539 , with 142,000 families on municipal waiting lists - are in desperate need of affordable, accessible, appropriate housing. This means that there is an extraordinarily long backlog of housing needs to be met and bold action is needed. This is a particularly crucial time for such a plan, as the Federal Government funding is eroding and both Federal and Provincial investments in affordable housing appear to be set to drop precipitously this year, and then continue on this downward trajectory over the next several years.

PCWO urges the Provincial Government once more to consider this an emergency; to work with all as many partners as possible, including the Federal Government, municipalities, private and non-profit housing providers, such as Co-operatives and advocates in the voluntary sector; and, to plan for significant, stable, multi-year funding for repairs of current housing stock, the building of a realistic number of affordable units to catch up with the backlog, and then to keep ahead of the need. We note that these much needed investments can not only go a long way to improve the living conditions and health of low income Ontarians, but can be a major driver in our economy. Failure to plan well ahead and make the required investments will continue to allow accelerated social, health and other related costs.

Housing Subsidies and Rental Protection for Tenants

PCWO notes that many housing groups are advocating for housing subsidies to ameliorate the difficulties faced by the 1.3 billion low income households which pay between 30% and 90% of their income on housing. PCWO remains concerned, despite rent controls, that landlords will be quick to note these subsidies and raise rents accordingly when units become vacant and when new units are built. We therefore urge the Government to close these loopholes before initiating any new rent supplement policies and programs.

SENIORS ISSUES

The Government of Ontario is to be commended for its plans to enable more seniors with chronic illnesses to remain in their homes by encouraging house calls by physicians. With the success of this program, we wonder if it could be expanded by involving nurse practitioners, especially in under-serviced regions.

Seniors often lose their family doctors to retirement and have great difficulty in finding replacements. Effective and efficient elder care can be provided by Community Health Centres or Aboriginal Access Centres, which are far less costly than hospital emergency rooms, and whose services extend beyond physical and mental health care to social support. Unfortunately there are too few of these Centres in Ontario.

For those seniors in long term care facilities, we urge that there be a mandatory minimum of three and one half hours of care per patient per day.

There has been a continuing rise of dementia in older adults particularly in older women, requiring more financial consideration in mental health care.

We also commend the Government for their retrofit programme for seniors retroactive to October 1, 2011.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Poverty Reduction

PCWO commends the government for initiating the recent Social Assistance Review - the most comprehensive since that of George Thomson in 1987/88 - with the purpose of providing recommendations for change that will help the government meet the goals of its 2008 Poverty Reduction Plan. Nevertheless, PCWO is most concerned that because of the drastic cuts to welfare rates in 1996 and the subsequent slow rate of increases since 2003, social assistance rates are not yet back to 1992 levels and children, parents and single persons continue to go hungry, live in substandard housing, line up

at food banks and do without basic necessities . Given the state of the economy, this will only increase as people continue to lose jobs and struggle to keep their homes and families together. This chronic lack of investment in poor families and individuals will continue to drive up costs within the health, justice and education systems, among others, and local community businesses will increasingly be deprived of income. Therefore, PCWO again stresses that social assistance rates should be adequate to provide for food, affordable shelter, clothing and other quality of life items, such as phone and transportation, and that subsequent increases should be tied to the rate of inflation. Many other Ontarians such as municipal governments and the Ontario Association of Nurses and Medical Officers of Health have asked the same of your Government. Most recently, PCWO support for an immediate payment of \$100 per month for all adults receiving social assistance was echoed by many provincial organizations, namely over 40 MPPs who have taken part in the 'Do the Math' and/ or the 'Put the Food in the Budget' campaigns, and by municipal Council motions in 20 Ontario communities representing over 3 million Ontarians. For all these reasons PCWO asks that the government not delay implementing progressive Commission recommendations, and most importantly to act immediately to provide adequate welfare rates and the \$100 per month supplement to needy individuals. In this way, your government can demonstrate its willingness to do, as the Transitions recommendations carried forward by previous governments of 1988 to 1993 did so well, i.e. recognize that any one of us could be poor through circumstance, poor health or a faltering economy. These individuals need to be provided with financial help, employment training programs, personal support and opportunities for contributing to the well-being of our communities, rather than being marginalized, often in abysmal conditions.

PROVINCIAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN OF ONTARIO
BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2011-2012

President:	Mary Potter
Past-President:	Thelma McGillivray
Secretary:	Phyllis Kerkhoven
Treasurer:	Margery Sherritt

Vice-Presidents

Economics:	Sheila McAuliffe
Education:	Betty Noble
Environment:	Gracia Janes
Health & Safety:	Beverlee McIntosh
Housing & Land Use:	Sheila Pepper
Resolutions:	Gracia Janes
Seniors Issues:	Luba Podolsky
Status of Women:	Leonida Hudson

Appointments

Archives:	Mary Lemyre
Membership:	Carol Canzona
Website:	Beverlee McIntosh
Newsletter:	Cynthia Dobrindt

