

DOMESTICS' CROSS-CULTURAL NEWS

monthly newsletter of the Toronto Organization for Domestic Workers' Rights

April 1990

(INTERCEDE)

WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT OHIP

Those who were not too sure about what will happen to their OHIP coverage got some clarification in discussions at the March monthly educational meeting with Bill Robertson, Assistant Manager, Customer Services of the Toronto OHIP office.

All residents of Ontario already covered under OHIP will continue to be covered under their present OHIP number after April 1, 1990, without having to pay any more premiums. This means that their **last payment for OHIP premiums would have been made in December 1989**, which ensured coverage until March 31, 1990.

From April 1, 1990, everyone who already has OHIP coverage and everyone who will register under OHIP in the future, will no longer pay any premium. OHIP coverage will no longer be by payment of premiums but by membership.

The main criteria for coverage is to be a resident of Ontario, meaning that a person is legally entitled to remain in Canada and makes her home in Ontario. Tourists, transients and visitors are not residents of Ontario and therefore do not qualify for OHIP coverage.

All Ontario residents who are registered in OHIP (who have OHIP numbers) are covered whether they are employed, unemployed or self-employed; whether they are retired, on social assistance, are seniors, over 65, or students. All dependents under age 21 are

covered, but after age 21, they should register for separate coverage.

All newly-arrived domestic workers who do not yet have an OHIP number should contact the nearest OHIP office and register to get their OHIP number. They will get immediate coverage and will not have to wait to be covered.

Those who are coming from another province in Canada to reside in Ontario will be covered three months after registration with the Ontario Health Insurance Plan, when their previous provincial coverage expires.

There are no changes to what OHIP covers and no new procedures: the OHIP number will be given to the doctor or the hospital, as before.

The nearest OHIP office must be notified for the following changes:

- change in family status
- change of address
- leaving Ontario province for more than three months, or
- leaving Ontario permanently.

Only the employer is responsible for paying a health tax. Any employer paying remuneration to an employee must pay the Employer Health Tax (EHT). This EHT is not a taxable benefit **nor a payroll deduction from the employee.**

Come to INTERCEDE's monthly meeting on Sunday, April 1, 1990 from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. at the Cecil Community Centre, 58 Cecil Street.

Rosa Tanega, Vice Chairperson of the Kababayan Community Centre will give us some tips about filing Income Tax returns. Be sure to bring your T1 General Form and the General Tax Guide, or get a copy from the nearest post office.

There will be CLASP Legal Clinic and INTERCEDE counselling will be available.

The employee is **not affected if the employer does not pay the health tax.** OHIP coverage is not linked to employer payment of EHT.

The responsibility of the employee is to make sure s/he is registered with the Ministry of Health and has an OHIP number.

For information about OHIP coverage in Metro Toronto, call 482-1111 (2195 Yonge St. at Eglinton) or 965-1000 (7 Overlea Blvd.).

For **employer** information about the EHT, call 965-8470 or write to Ministry of Revenue, Employer Health Tax, P.O. Box 627, 33 King St. West, Oshawa, Ontario, L1H 8H5; or visit the Public Enquiry Centre at 50 Grosvenor St. (1 block south of Wellesley, west of Bay).

COCO's CALENDAR

Thank you...

Erl Tubungan, for speaking on behalf of INTERCEDE at the Speaker's Corner in Ryerson during International Women's Day. And to all the volunteers who printed the placards and helped mail the newsletters. Specially to the meeting volunteers who process the new members or help in the clean-up. You know who you are!

Claim compensation for assault...

I am reprinting excerpts from some useful information given to us by Lori Pope of Parkdale Community Legal Services Inc.:

"If you have been assaulted in Ontario by your husband, boyfriend, employer, or a stranger, you may be able to get compensation

from the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board".

"You must be able to show that you were injured. Reports from a doctor who saw you after the assault are the best evidence. Photographs or testimony from witnesses are also helpful."...

"You may claim money for medical costs (including counselling),...transportation to the hospital, childcare, lost wages if you were unable to go to work or lost your job, and pain and suffering."

"The Criminal Injuries Compensation Board was set up by the government to help victims of crimes of violence. You are eligible for compensation even if your attacker has no money or income."

"To be compensated you must fill out a claim application which you can order from the Board at 965-4755...Claim must be received within a year of the assault, but extensions are also possible. A legal aid clinic may assist you for free, whether or not your claim is successful."

"The Board will decide whether you are eligible for compensation and how much money you will receive, according to the seriousness of the injury and costs you have incurred as a result of the assault... The maximum amount awarded is \$25,000 although most claims are awarded much less than this. For more information, contact your local legal aid clinic."

The Parkdale Legal Clinic also has a Domestic Workers Support Group that meets monthly for social events and legal advice. Call Kristin, Rob or Amarna at 531-2411.

We wish to thank the Employment and Immigration Canada (Immigrant Settlement and Adaptation Program); Secretary of State (Multiculturalism and Women's Program); Ontario Ministry of Citizenship; Ontario Women's Directorate; the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto (Community and Social Services); and the City of Toronto, for their financial support.

NEW SUBSCRIPTION: CHANGE OF ADDRESS:
MAIL TO: INTERCEDE, 489 College St., Suite 402, Toronto, Ontario M6G 1A5

Please send DOMESTICS' CROSS-CULTURAL NEWS to:

NAME:

ADDRESS:

CITY/PROVINCE:

POSTAL CODE: TELEPHONE:

YEARLY SUBSCRIPTION RATES:

Intercede Members	FREE	Non-member Domestic Worker	\$ 5.00
Non-Profit Organizations	FREE	Others	\$10.00

"WE TAKE CARE OF YOUR BABIES, YOU TAKE CARE OF OUR HUMAN RIGHTS"

Members of INTERCEDE, the Philippine-Canadian Women's Association and Program for Domestic Workers' Concerns formed a contingent of domestic workers who joined the International Women's Day march on March 3 to demand equal rights.

They carried placards that announced: "We are not prisoners, we don't need release papers!" This referred to the practice of having to get release papers from their employers before they could be given an authorization by the Immigration ministry to look for a new employer.

"Abolish Slavery, abolish forced live-in", other placards cried out to protest the requirement under the Foreign Domestic Movement program that foreign domestic workers on temporary work permits live-in the home of their employer.

Bolstered by the energizing rally of hundreds of women at the University of Toronto Convocation Hall and inspired by the sense of solidarity they felt in the march, the domestic workers chanted good-naturedly, but militantly, "We take care of your babies, you take care of our human rights" and "Good enough to work, good enough for equal rights."

As they marched, domestic workers handed out postcards to be sent to Immigration Minister Barbara McDougall that read: "Foreign domestic workers should have equal rights. Stop the discrimination against them and allow their entry as landed immigrants. A system of indenturing foreign women's labour to meet the great demand for domestic labour and child care service contradicts the effort to gain equality for women in this country."

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

What should I do to sponsor my dependents?

Answer: First of all, if you are in the Foreign Domestic Movement program, you will have to wait until you have received your landed immigrant status before you can sponsor any dependents. Make sure that you mention the names of these dependents in your application for landed status. After you have become a landed immigrant, you can start the process of sponsorship. You will be required to meet a certain level of income depending on the number of dependents you

OCASI, others lend support

Meanwhile, the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI), through its President of the Board, Annamaria Menozzi, has written to Minister McDougall in support of INTERCEDE's recommendations for improving the FDM program.

"Your positive response to the recommendations of the Toronto Organization for Domestic Workers' Rights (INTERCEDE) would illustrate the commitment of your government to a fair and just immigration policy," she wrote.

The Coalition of Visible Minority Women (Ontario), Network of Filipino-Canadian Women, the Philippine-Canadian Women's Association and others have voiced their support along with hundreds of individuals who have sent letters and postcards of support.

At the Symposium on Women's Place in the Economy held by the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women in Ottawa, its newly appointed president, Glenda Simms, expressed her interest in the domestic workers' issue when she met Fely Villasin, Coordinator of INTERCEDE, at the opening reception. Villasin asked symposium participants to look into the domestic workers' present situation and focus some attention to it.

In Guelph, about a dozen domestic workers gathered at the home of Linda Oro to discuss their situation with INTERCEDE Board member Sedef Arat-Koc and Villasin and to confirm INTERCEDE's recommendations.

They said that if they had a chance to meet with Minister McDougall face to face, they would ask her "why we have to wait for two years before we can be free".

are sponsoring. Call 973-4444, Immigration tele-message, 6 a.m. to midnight everyday, for general information.

How much should I be paid if I am asked to work during my day-off?

Answer: If you have already worked 44 hours during a week, you must get the overtime rate for every extra hour you work in that same week, that is, 1.5 times your hourly rate, (or 1.5 hours of compensatory time for every hour you work, if this is what you agreed with your employer).

WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS LEARN ABOUT DOMESTIC WORKERS

In many localities outside of Metro, domestic workers do not have an organization like INTERCEDE to serve them and they have nowhere to go when they have problems. To make some services accessible to them, INTERCEDE held a training workshop for settlement workers from outside Metro Toronto to share with them information about the Foreign Domestic Movement program and labour protection domestic workers have in Ontario.

Participants came from Hamilton, Peterborough, Kitchener-Waterloo, Belleville, Sarnia, Woodstock, St. Catharines, and as far as Windsor, Ottawa, North Bay and Sudbury. Most of the settlement workers came to the workshop with little previous contact with domestic workers; they felt that their knowledge of the FDM program and of labour protection in Ontario was inadequate for them to be able to counsel domestic workers.

The whole-day session began with Board member Sedef Arat-Koc's presentation on the History of Domestic Workers in Canada, which gave an insight into the historical reasons for the low value given to domestic work. Mary Jarrell, president of the Board, followed with an overview of the FDM pro-

gram and a discussion of the requirements and criteria covering foreign domestic workers. Coordinator Fely Villasin then presented the recommendations submitted to Minister Barbara McDougall for improvements to the FDM. After lunch, lawyer Ian Anderson discussed how domestic workers in Ontario are covered under the Employment Standards Act, Workers Compensation and Human Rights regulations.

The rest of the afternoon was spent in problem-solving workshops, where participants tackled immigration- and labour-related cases or situations that domestic workers often encounter.

There was a lively interaction in the workshop and participants evaluated the whole-day event in very positive terms. Most of them felt the workshop was useful and productive, and contributed significantly to their knowledge of domestic workers, the FDM and the labour regulations affecting them.

by Karen Serwonka

(Karen would like to thank the presenters, volunteers, members of the Board and Staff of INTERCEDE for their important contributions to the success of the workshop.)

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Canada Immigration Centre	973-4444
Employment Standards Enforcement	326-7160
Revenue Canada (Taxation)	869-1500
Immigrant Women's Job Placement Centre	656-8933
Educ & Skills Training Ctr, Labour Council	971-5893
Legal Services	
Parkdale Community Legal Services	531-2411
CLASP (Osgoode Law School) Legal Clinic	736-5029
Kensington-Bellwoods Community Legal Serv.	363-0304
Metro Tor. Chinese & SE Asian Legal Clinic	971-9674
Emergency Housing	
Nelle's Hostel	461-1084
Evangeline's	762-9636

Unemployment Insurance	730-1211
Ontario Human Rights Commission	326-9511
OHIP	965-1000
Immigrant Women's Health Centre	367-1388

INTERCEDE SERVICE UNIT

Place: 489 College St., Suite 402, Toronto, Ontario
Time: Monday - Friday, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Telephone: (416) 3

INTERCEDE STAFF

Coordinator/Editor:
Counsellors:

DOMESTICS' CROSS-CULTURAL NEWS

c/o INTERCEDE
489 College St., Suite 402
Toronto, Ontario
M6G 1A5

FIRST CLASS