

DOMESTICS' CROSS-CULTURAL NEWS

monthly newsletter of the Toronto Organization for Domestic Workers' Rights

May 1994



(INTERCEDE)

OHIP COVERAGE CONTINUES FOR DOMESTIC AND CAREGIVER WORKERS IN LIVE-IN CAREGIVER PROGRAM (LCP)

All domestic and caregiver workers who are in Canada under the Live-in Caregiver Program (LCP) remain covered by the Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP). This was confirmed to INTERCEDE by Jane Stewart, Program Manager in the Communications Branch of the Ontario Health Ministry.

Worried foreign domestic and caregiver workers and their employers have been calling INTERCEDE wanting to know whether the announcement made by the Ontario Health Ministry regarding new OHIP restrictions meant that the workers will lose OHIP coverage.

INTERCEDE has confirmed that all foreign domestic and caregiver workers in the LCP, even if they are already on "open permit" and awaiting permanent resident status, will continue to be covered under OHIP.

If you receive a letter

Workers were confused and some were panicking, over letters they received from the Health Ministry telling them that their OHIP coverage would stop at the end of June. INTERCEDE has been advising callers who have these letters to go to the nearest Health Ministry office with original copies of their current work authorization and to inform that they are in the LCP and should continue to be covered under OHIP.

The Ontario Health Ministry announced that effective March 31, 1994, OHIP would cover only Canadian citizens, landed immigrants and Convention Refugees who are permanent residents

living in Ontario. The announcement specified that "foreign workers" who hold employment authorizations are not eligible for OHIP.

However, an exception is made for "people who come to Ontario for the primary purpose of working temporarily" and have been issued an employment authorization before coming to Canada to work with a specific employer at a specific job and for a limited time. This exception applies to all LCP workers including those who are on open employment authorizations or "open permits" whose application for permanent resident or landed status is being processed.

Another measure to discourage families

Unfortunately, even if LCP participants continue to be covered under OHIP, any family members accompanying them would not be. INTERCEDE considers this extremely discriminatory specially to women in the LCP who are generally lowly paid, often below minimum wage, and who would need OHIP most.

Foreign domestic and caregiver workers in the LCP are allowed to apply for permanent resident status from within Canada after they have completed 24 months of doing live-in caregiving work. While this application for permanent resident status is being processed, they are given an open employment authorization that does not restrict them to live-in caregiving work.

Majority if not all married domestic workers are unable to bring their families when they come to

Come to INTERCEDE's monthly meeting on Sunday, May 1, 1994, 3-5 p.m. at Cecil Community Centre, 58 Cecil Street, South of College & Spadina

2-3 p.m. New member application and renewals. Members with ID numbers 93-0323 to 93-0387 must renew or be dropped from membership list.

3-4 p.m. **HEALTH, SEXUALITY, REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS**
with Simone Hammond, Counsellor, Women's Health in Women's Hands

CLASP Legal Clinic will be open.

Canada for a number of obvious reasons: huge travel expenses, the low pay awaiting them etc. but most specially because of the live-in requirement of the LCP.

There are some instances where single mothers don't have a choice but to bring their young children along and they are lucky to find an employer willing to take them into his household.

The OHIP exclusion of family members adds another condition to the separation of domestic workers from their families and to their isolation.

Immigration continues indenture labour

A longstanding demand of foreign domestic workers is to allow them to enter Canada as permanent residents or landed immigrants instead of as temporary visitors with permit to work.

But Immigration policy continues to discriminate against these workers, who are mostly women of colour in countries of the South seeking a better life for their families in Canada.

"The recent panic over losing OHIP just highlights the desperation and vulnerability of foreign domestic workers because of their temporary visitor status. Living under constant anxiety is the way these women live and there is no justifiable reason to continue such a discriminatory immigration policy for a group of

CARIBBEAN GROUP MEETING
Sunday, May 15, 1994 3-5 pm
Call Carol 324-8751 for meeting place

ORIENTATION MEETING
 Sunday, June 19, 1994 10 am - to 5 pm
 George Brown College (St.James Campus) R-128
 200 King Street East (east of King Subway)

IMMIGRATION AND LABOUR RULES
 Call 324-8751 to register - Registration fee \$5
 (Refunded if you are present on June 19)

COMBINED FIRST AID AND CPR CLASS
 (at Discounted rates for INTERCEDE members)
 Saturday, May 28, 1994 9:30 am - 4:30 pm
 or
 Sunday, May 29, 1994 10 a.m - 5 pm
 Space for each class is limited.
 Register early and pay \$45 to INTERCEDE.
 For more information call 324-8751

VANCOUVER CDWCR
Committee for Domestic Workers' &
Caregivers' Rights
 (an INTERCEDE Affiliate)
Contact Julie or Lorina (604) 222-1897

women whose services continue to be in demand in this country," according to Joan Grant-Cummings, President of INTERCEDE.

Ontario Health Ministry criticized

"INTERCEDE finds the Ontario Health Ministry's restrictions on OHIP coverage deplorable and had expressed opposition at the time when this action was being proposed to include foreign domestic and caregiver workers", further commented Grant-Cummings, who works as Executive Director of Women's Health in Women's Hands.

"During hard times, it is always the most vulnerable members of our society who suffer the most; ironically, the solutions to our pressing problems are often made at their expense and borne on their backs. High-profile campaigns such as running after welfare frauds

We wish to thank the Citizenship and Immigration Canada (Immigration Settlement and Adaptation Program); Canadian Heritage; Multiculturalism and Citizenship; Ontario Ministry of Citizenship; Ontario Women's Directorate; the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto (Community and Social Services); and the City of Toronto Grants Review Board for their continuing support.

TO ALL SUBSCRIBERS since April 1993 (Does not apply to current members)
 INTERESTED TO CONTINUE RECEIVING THIS NEWSLETTER? SEND THE FORM BELOW WITH PAYMENT.
 IF NO RENEWAL SUBSCRIPTION BY END OF MAY, WE'LL REMOVE YOUR NAME FROM OUR MAILING LIST.

RENEWAL SUBSCRIPTION 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 : _____
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YEARLY SUBSCRIPTION RATES :

INTERCEDE Members :	FREE	Non-member Domestic :	\$20.00
Non-Profit Organizations:	FREE	Others	\$25.00

and now cutting OHIP from "foreigners" serve to reinforce society's anti-immigrant biases and right-wing attacks against women, the poor and people of colour," Grant-Cummings added.

TAXATION QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

How will I know if my employer has registered me with Revenue Canada and is paying the correct amount of Income Tax, Canada Pension Plan (CPP) and Unemployment Insurance (UI)?

It is unlikely that you will be able to obtain this information before you get a T4 slip unless your employer is willing to tell you what your gross pay is and what deduction are being remitted on your behalf. Revenue Canada considers this information confidential and will not usually release this information to the employee.

Once you get your T4 slip you can contact Revenue Canada or check the Taxguide for payroll deductions to determine what the appropriate remittances are for the annual gross pay on your T4.

What should I do if I find that the deductions on my T4 are not correct?

You have the right to identify the error(s) in your T4 to your employer and explain why it needs to be changed. After all, you do not want to be held responsible for filing an incorrect document to Revenue Canada.

My employer refuses to give me a correct T4. What can I do?

First of all, you may want to get someone to assist you in estimating the correct deductions and then file your tax return based on these estimates. You should attach a written letter detailing what you're doing and how you calculated those figures.

If you are unwilling or unable to estimate these deductions you can fill out a complaint form stating that your employer refused to give you a correct T4. Revenue Canada will look into the matter and request changes, if necessary. These forms can be obtained at the nearest Revenue Canada Taxation Centre.

I just received my T4 slip and the tax remitted is substantially lower than what it should be. My ex-employer says that she reduced the amount of money in taxes she remits to Revenue Canada so that I could have a higher pay. This is unfair, what can I do?

You have the right to inform your employer that your pay was based on the agreed upon salary. And that

CHINESE GROUP MEETING

SUNDAY, MAY 15, 1994 5:00 - 6:00 pm
Call 324-8751 for meeting place

GET YOUR TICKETS NOW!

INTERCEDE invites you to a dance to
CELEBRATE A DECADE OF SERVICE

Saturday, May 28, 1994 7 pm to 1 am
Scadding Court, 707 Dundas Street West
Light buffet included in \$13.00 ticket

Attire: Semi-Formal

Music by: Playhouse D.J. Services

It would serve no purpose for you to agree to this salary if you have to give it back to Revenue Canada at the end of the year.

If your employer refuses to pay the correct tax you can fill out a complaint form with Taxation Canada explaining why you would like your case reassessed. Please call INTERCEDE for assistance.

It is very important that you keep record of your pay and the specific hours that you worked with each employer. In the event that there is a problem with your wages or taxes you can provide a record to support your case.

INTERCEDE can help you make a claim to the Ministry of Labour to get the money you should have been paid for overtime.

My employer will not put the amount that was deducted for Room costs in my T4. What should I do?

You should inform your employer that since Room was deducted from your salary you have the right to expect the employer to put this amount on your T4 so that you can claim it under the Ontario Property Tax Credit.

If your employer refuses you can calculate the correct amount based on the maximum allowed in 1993 which was \$29.40 per week worked and put your calculation in the Ontario Property Tax Credit section of your tax return.

Can I claim my airfare to Canada as a moving expense?

Yes, you can try to claim the airfare from your original entry to Canada under the Live-In Caregiver Program in the Moving Expenses section of your Tax Return.

Can I claim my employment authorization fees?

Yes. Your employment authorization is directly related to you having a source of income in Canada therefore you should be able to claim the fee for your work permit under the Other Expenses section.

Can I still claim my overseas dependant children under the Ontario Child Tax Credit?

No. In order to claim a deduction for your dependent children they must have resided in Canada at some time during the 1993 tax year.

However, you can claim a tax exemption for your spouse even if he never lived in Canada during the last tax year as long as he was dependent on your financial support.

If you are claiming for your spouse you must file form T1E-N1R and submit evidence of the amount spent in support. However, if he has enough income from other sources for a reasonable standard of living in his own country, he may not be considered dependent by Revenue Canada. Please contact Revenue Canada for further clarification.

I filed my Tax Return already and I would like to make some changes as a result of the above Tax information. Is it too late?

No. You can file a request to have your Tax Return reassessed at any point during this year or in 1995. You may want to wait until you receive the first assessment.

Thank you to Mary Lynne Cooney, Chartered Accountant for her presentation at INTERCEDE's April Monthly Meeting. Thanks also to the Association of Filipino Canadian Accountants who volunteered to help INTERCEDE members prepare their tax return at the April 10th meeting.

PILIPINAS GROUP GETS LEGAL INFORMATION

At the Pilipinas meeting on Sunday, April 17, 1994, Bayani Abesamis enthusiastically answered questions by Filipino domestic workers. Abesamis is a lawyer from the Philippines who has just taken his oath to practice law in Canada.

Abesamis emphasized the importance of declaring correct information on public documents like Passports, Birth Certificates, Marriage Certificates and NBI Clearances.

Majority of questions dealt with marital status. Prior to leaving the Philippines, some domestic workers would give incorrect information about

their marital status which is a serious matter and can be used as material evidence against them under Philippine as well as Canadian laws.

To correct misrepresentations, domestic workers may choose to contact the Legal Officer of the Philippine Consulate, or seek assistance from INTERCEDE or from a Legal clinic.

The following were some of the topics discussed:

- Citizenship** - Once a Filipino citizen receives Canadian citizenship, he/she loses the original citizenship. Filipinos are not allowed to have DUAL citizenship.
- Property** - Filipinos who become Canadian citizens can acquire or buy property in the Philippines as long as it is a residential property and not more than 1,000 square meters.
- Power of Attorney** - can be drawn for a Canadian citizen in order to give permission for someone in the Philippines to transact business on his/her behalf.
- Returning Permanent Resident Permit** - is needed for a landed immigrant who plans to live outside Canada for more than 183 days if the reason for doing so is valid, such as taking a job assignment abroad or needing professional upgrading, etc.
- Affidavits, Statutory Declarations and Sworn Statements** are some forms of disclosing, giving or pledging an information that has to be attested by a lawyer, barrister solicitor or notary public.

INTERCEDE SERVICE UNIT

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FIRST CLASS