



Vancouver Women's Health Collective

HER VOICE

Spring 2005

Are you interested in...

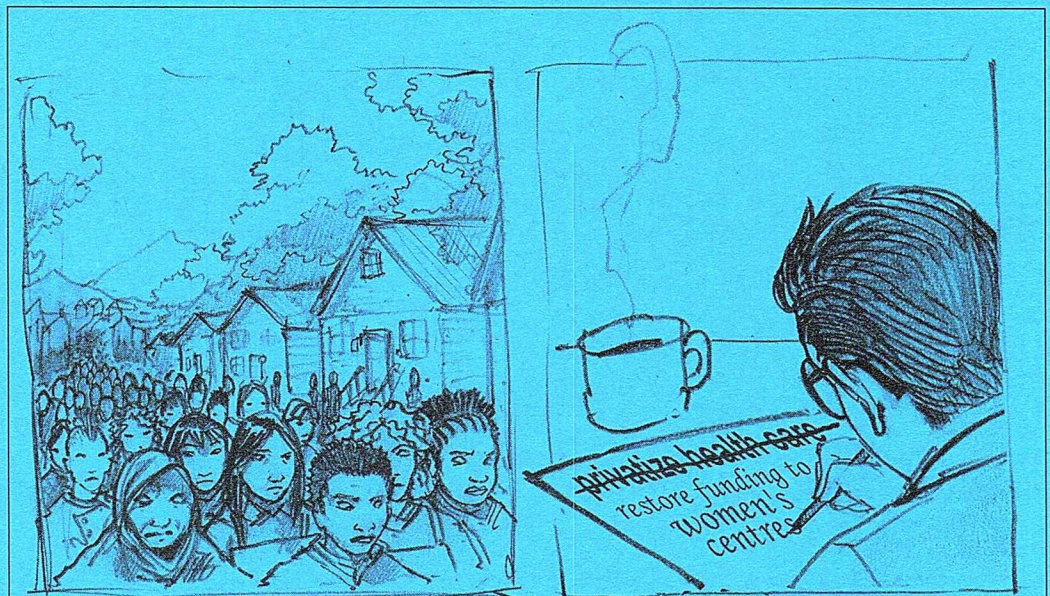
Doing research on complementary therapies, reproductive issues, or endometriosis? Knowing about the health resources available to you in your community? Finding a new doctor or therapist? Inviting the VWHC to your meeting to do a women's health workshop?

Then please call our health information line: 604-736-5262, visit our Health Information Centre, or check out our web site: www.womenshealthcollective.ca

Staffed predominantly by volunteers, the Information Centre is open:
Mondays and Wednesdays
4:00 to 8:00 p.m.
Saturdays
Noon to 5:00 p.m.

The Vancouver Women's Health Collective will be moving on June 1, 2005. Please check out our web site or call us for our new address.

May 17, 2005 - Women Vote!



As polls indicate that already record and growing numbers of women are set to turn out for this year's provincial election...

Candidates scramble to adjust their platforms...



And the key players in winning the vote for women finally get a rest from rolling over in their graves...

Kierston Vande Kraats



27 Reasons Why You Should Vote on May 17, 2005 – BC's Provincial Election:

1. Elimination of the Ministry of Women's Equality – Canada's first and only free-standing ministry dedicated to advancing equality for women.
2. Elimination of 100% of core funding for women's centres – On April 1, 2004, the provincial government cut core funding for the 37 women's centres in BC.
3. Revisions to spousal assault policy – Crown counsel has shifted from the long-standing policy of laying charges in virtually all cases of spousal assault where there is a reasonable likelihood of conviction.
4. Elimination of support programs for victims of domestic violence.
5. Funding cuts to women-run crisis lines.
6. Cuts to legal aid – Legal aid is no longer available for family law except where there is evidence of violence. Women disproportionately need and use legal aid for family law matters. Poverty law assistance – landlord/tenant matters, employment insurance, employment standards, welfare, and disability pension claims or appeals – has also been eliminated.
7. Courthouse closures – Closing courthouses affects access to justice, particularly for women in rural areas.
8. Restrictions to welfare – Reducing already meager welfare assistance and narrowing eligibility rules forces women to stay in abusive relationships or engage in survival sex to supplement welfare.
9. Restrictions to welfare for young people – Making young people who have not lived independently for two years ineligible for welfare thereby forces even more young girls into survival sex.
10. The mean-spirited treatment of those on disability benefits – Subjecting people with disabilities to a grueling 30-page review to retain their benefits.
11. Elimination of the independent Human Rights Commission.
12. Barriers to post secondary education – Dramatically increasing tuition fees at colleges and universities, eliminating grants and making students ineligible for welfare benefits.
13. The \$6 an hour training wage – This is \$2 an hour less than an already inadequate minimum wage.
14. Employment standards diminished – Redefining the number of hours that comprise a legal work week, restricting payment for overtime, reducing a minimum shift from 4 to 2 hours, allowing for child labour and forcing workers to first deal with complaints against bad employers through a "self-help kit."
15. Childcare cutbacks – Program and funding cuts to child care and before and after school care.
16. Medical Services Plan premium increases – MSP premiums have increased by 50%, climbing to \$54 a month for a single woman who makes \$28,000 a year and \$1,296 a year for a family with a combined income of \$37,000.
17. MSP service cuts – The costs of physiotherapy, chiropractic care, eye examinations, massage therapy, podiatry, and visits to the naturopath are no longer covered under the Medical Services Plan.
18. Making Pharmacare unfair – Increased deductibles and income testing that has offloaded \$90 million a year onto individuals.
19. Pushing frail seniors out of residential care – In the last 3 years 2,529 residential care beds have been removed from the system.
20. Severely restricting access to home support – Between 1997 and 2002, the number of British Columbians receiving basic home support services dropped by 50%. Since 2002, thousands

of seniors, people with disabilities, and people with chronic illnesses have been deemed ineligible for home support.

21. Closing hospitals and downgrading hospital services – Women must travel to have their babies, and community-based hospitals are no longer able to offer a full range of required services.
22. Loss of health sector jobs – 87% of health care workers are women. Between 2002 and 2004, 8,000 unionized health care workers lost their jobs and thousands more had their wages rolled back by 15%.
23. Pay equity – A hard won battle for women health care workers has been lost with private contractors. Wages have dropped from \$19 to between \$9.50 and \$11 per hour with few if any benefits.
24. Privatizing health care – Contracting out surgeries previously carried out at hospitals to privately owned for-profit clinics.
25. Public-private partnerships (P3s) – The government is moving ahead with the privately financed construction of the Abbotsford hospital and a P3 will build and run an outpatient facility at Vancouver General Hospital.
26. Tax cuts at the expense of social programs – In 2001, \$2 billion was cut from the tax base. This tax cut reduced income taxes for British Columbians by 25%. The provincial government's 2005 budget will result in further tax reductions estimated at \$484 million in 2005/06, \$496 million in 2006/07, and \$501 million in 2007/08.
27. Budget surpluses at the expense of social programs – The budget surplus forecast for 2004/05 is \$1.4 billion. Budget surpluses of approximately \$1 billion are expected in each of the next three budget years.

“The Committee is concerned about a number of recent changes in British Columbia which have a disproportionately negative impact on women, in particular Aboriginal women. Among these changes are: the cut in funds for legal aid and welfare assistance, including changes in eligibility rules; the cut in welfare assistance; the incorporation of the Ministry of Women’s Equality under the Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women’s Services; the abolition of the independent Human Rights Commission; the closing of a number of courthouses; and the proposed changes regarding the prosecution of domestic violence as well as the cut in support programs for victims of domestic violence.”

United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, January 31, 2003

52% Coalition – Women Vote! May 17, 2005

- Women organizing for women’s equality
- Putting women’s issues on the political agenda

For more information:

www.sfss.ca/52percentcoalition

Please check out the BC Health Coalition’s Provincial Election Campaign
www.bchealthcoalition.ca

VWHC Membership Application

Please choose the membership that suits you:

- Individual Member** (women only) \$10-25/yr \$ _____
- Community Member/Organizations** (women's organization, health practitioner, union, business, etc.) \$50/yr \$ _____
 - As community organizations may include men, we require that you respect our women-only policy.

All VWHC Members

- Support the mission statement, values, and goals of the VWHC
- Receive the VWHC's newsletter, HER VOICE
- Are invited to special events, workshops, and the VWHC AGM
- Please contact us at 604-736-5262, or vwhc@vcn.bc.ca, if you are interested in becoming a **VWHC Volunteer**.

I wish to make a donation to the VWHC (a charitable tax receipt will be issued) \$ _____

Full amount of my membership fee and donation \$ _____

VWHC Universal Purpose

Health for all women in an equitable society.

VWHC Mission Statement

We are women who value women's knowledge, support one another to take charge of our own health, and raise awareness and inspire action for the feminist advancement of women's health.

I have read, understood, and support the VWHC Universal Purpose and Mission Statement.

Please sign: _____ Date: _____

Name: _____

Address : _____
(street) (city/province) (postal code)

Phone: _____

World March of Women May 1, 2005

- 10:30 Greet the Women's Global Charter at the Peace Arch
- 11:30 Gather at the South Plaza at the Vancouver Public Library
- Noon Celebrate the Women's Global Charter for Humanity

A new book in our Resource Library...

Winning Choice on Abortion

How Feminists Won the Battles of the
1970s and 1980s

By Ann Thomson

