

## WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT

- Contribute as much as possible to the pro-choice defence fund
- Join or donate money to OCAC, or set up a local pro-choice group. Your membership helps us to continue our organizing. Better still become an active member by attending our bi-weekly general meetings.
- Write Mark MacGuigan, federal Minister of Justice requesting the removal of abortion from the federal criminal code.
- Write Ontario Attorney General Roy McMurtry urging him to drop the charges against the doctors
- Write Ontario Minister of Health Keith Norton urging him to legalize free-standing abortion clinics.
- Invite OCAC speakers to your groups and organizations
- Wear the Pro-Choice button

I, \_\_\_\_\_, support the legalization of free-standing clinics to provide medically insured abortions.

Seniors, unemployed, students \$5 or what you can afford. Individual member \$10 Group membership \$25 Sponsor \$100.

Enclosed is \$\_\_\_\_\_ for a membership in OCAC.

Enclosed is \$15 , \$25 , \$50 , \_\_\_\_\_, to support the ongoing work of the **Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics**.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_

Send to OCAC, P.O. BOX 753, Station P, Toronto, Ontario M5S 2Z1

I want to contribute to the defense of those charged because they were helping women to obtain safe abortions in free-standing clinics.

I am enclosing \$15 , \$25 , \$50 , \_\_\_\_\_, to the **Pro-Choice Defence Fund**.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_

Send to OCAC, P.O. BOX 753, Station P, Toronto, Ontario M5S 2Z1

— RIGHT TO CHOOSE —

## WE CAN WIN

In response to the deteriorating access to safe abortions, Dr. Henry Morgentaler opened a free-standing abortion clinic in Toronto in June 1983. The Ontario government quickly raided the clinic, charging the doctors with conspiracy to perform an abortion. The day after the raid, thousands expressed public outrage by demonstrating at Queen's Park demanding the legalization of free-standing abortion clinics and the dropping of the charges.

Despite the overwhelming public support for choice and the obvious need for greater access to abortion, the provincial government has refused to approve the clinic as a hospital and, with the federal government, continues the prosecution of the doctors. The cost of battling two levels of government in court are enormous. The pro-choice defence fund will be a major factor in our success or failure.

Since the fall of 1982, OCAC has been actively organizing pro-choice support. An increasing number of organizations including the Canadian Labour Congress, the Ontario Federation of Labour, the New Democratic Party, the Canadian Abortion Rights Action League, the National Action Committee for the Status of Women, the Medical Reform Group of Ontario, Women Working with Immigrant Women, the International Women's Day Committee and the Law Union of Ontario have endorsed the legalization of free-standing abortion clinics.

But the anti-choice minority has been strident, well-organized and heavily financed. The federal government, which claims neutrality has been introducing anti-choice arguments about fetal rights in Ontario. The stakes are high. Women's right to choose is in danger if the pro-choice majority does not speak out.

We are the majority and the majority believes in the right to choose. We need your help to prove it.

**O.C.A.C.**

**P.O. Box 753, Station P  
Toronto, Ont. M5S 2Z1  
Tel.: (416) 532-8193**



The issue is **CHOICE**.

*"No woman can call herself free who does not own or control her own body. No woman can call herself free until she can choose consciously whether she will or will not be a mother".*

—Margaret Sanger

(early 20th century American birth control activist)

In 1984, women's basic rights are still denied.

# ♀CHOICE

The situations of Mary, Ruth and Louise are typical of those of hundreds of other women:

Mary is 37, has five children and got pregnant while using birth control. She wants an abortion. When she called a Toronto hospital clinic, they told her she would have to call back. She called for weeks and couldn't get an appointment. Finally desperate, she went to the U.S.

- **Half of the women seeking abortions got pregnant while using some form of contraception**
- **This hospital gets 75 calls like Mary's a day. They book only six**
- **The number of Ontario women using clinics in Buffalo has increased 30% in the last year**

Ruth got pregnant in the middle of Grade 12. She didn't want to tell her parents. But she found out that she had to pay \$350 in advance before her abortion. Traumatized having to ask her parents for the money she entered hospital and was put in the same room as a woman who was terribly upset about her recent miscarriage.

- **Most doctors who perform abortion are opted out of OHIP and charge high fees**
- **Hospitals are not always a sympathetic environment for women seeking abortions**

Louise lives in a small Northern Ontario town. She too is pregnant. Her husband has been laid off and they are in dire financial straits. Abortions are not done in her town. They tell her she must travel to Toronto to have one.

- **More than 30% of women in Ontario live in communities where hospitals do not provide abortions.**
- **More than 70% of hospitals in Canada do not perform abortions at all.**

A recent Gallup Poll showed that 72% of people in Canada believe that a woman has a basic right to an abortion. Yet women are consistently denied access to safe abortions.

## THE RIGHT TO CHOOSE

The Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics (OCAC) believes that the right to control our bodies is a basic human right. Yet women do not have this right. Controlling our bodies means the right to choose if and when to have children. Essential to this right is access to safe, free abortions.



In a society where women are sexually and economically exploited, where women make up the largest percentage of the poor, where women are often denied parental leave and access to daycare and individually carry the major responsibility for child-rearing, where women are raped and beaten, and where contraceptives often fail or have serious side effects, abortion must be an available option.

The issue is not pro- or anti-abortion. The issue is choice.

Women who are against abortion already have the right to follow their beliefs to continue an unplanned pregnancy to term. But anti-choice organizations are conducting a well-financed campaign to try and deny women who consider abortion a responsible choice from carrying out their decision. Through pressure on hospitals, legislators and any public figure who speaks out on choice as well as through emotional and often inaccurate literature about abortion they are attempting to impose a minority moral and religious view on the pro-choice majority. Standing up to this intimidation is a key task of the pro-choice movement.

## WHY CLINICS?

In 1969, the federal criminal code was amended so that abortions remain illegal unless approved by a committee of three doctors in an approved hospital. But hospitals are not required to set up committees and even those that have committees are not required to perform abortions. Access to abortion has been declining.

## LEGALIZE FREE-STANDING ABORTION CLINICS

In Quebec, government funded community clinics provide medically-insured abortions despite the federal law. They exist there because of broad public support for the right to choose.

Studies have shown that first trimester abortions provided in free-standing clinics are as safe as, and less expensive for government funders, than those provided in hospitals. A free-standing clinic is a clinic outside of a hospital where abortions are provided on an outpatient basis. This type of clinic also offers a supportive environment, counselling and more thorough birth control information.

OCAC's aim is government funded community or women's clinics where access to medically-insured safe abortions performed by trained personnel in a supportive environment is guaranteed. The establishment of Dr. Morgentaler's clinics and the challenge they pose to the abortion law is a crucial first step towards this goal.