

Survey of Women's Health Needs released

An 82 page report entitled "A Survey of Women's Health Needs In the North" was released in early June by the Northwestern Ontario Women's Health Education Project (N.W.O. WHEP). Intended as a basis for their own health education work in the region, the authors of the report recommend that other community agencies place more emphasis on education that involves community women and enhances their awareness of resources available to them. As a long term goal, the report recommends community-based women's health centres run on a self-help model.

Based on 467 respondents from 14 targeted communities, authors of the report say that the findings are in no way definitive but indicate problem areas, women's health concerns and point to some possible solutions such as self-help groups.

An outstanding observation of the report is that northern women face many forms of isolation; isolation from husbands who work long hours or away from home; from extended family and friends left behind in another community; from other local women who are part of a well-established group and from facilities and services, particularly medical services that they may have taken for granted elsewhere. The physical and emotion-

al isolation that affects women in northern communities can intensify the stress that so many of the women surveyed said that they wished to know more about.

Based on the women's perceived needs in their communities, the report directs a number of its recommendations to the agencies and professional such as Public Health Units, Family and Children's Services and the Registered Nurses Association, each of which could provide the appropriate resources to respond to the needs.

For instance, when asked where health information is most frequently sought, the women said their first choice would be a friend and the second a resource book. Nurses ranked low and might, therefore, be considered an under utilized information source.

A three year health promotion project, WHEP responded to the survey observations by developing workshops

on topics selected by the women. Nutrition, Stress and Menopause and Aging were the three topics delivered in the target communities from October 1983 to May of this year. Beginning in the fall of 1984, public workshops on Patient's Rights and Responsibilities and Breaking the Diet Habit will be held. Workshops on Childbirth, Birth Control and Pre-Menstrual Syndrome have also been developed for future community use.

The report concludes that because of the unique factors faced by residents of Northwestern Ontario such as the shortage of medical personnel, distance to travel to specialists, separation from the support of extended families, isolation and the overall lack of information and resources in the area of health, an alternate plan for health care must be established in Northwestern Ontario to fill gaps in the present health care system. Project co-ordinators note

that while measures are being taken to deal with medical emergencies, not enough is being done in the area of effective health education and prevention on a community level. The report recommends that the decisions and plans for health centres be made at a community level and stress a strong self-help component among the women working on health needs.

The N.W.O. WHEP has chosen to focus on women because they are still very often the primary caregiver in the home particularly in resource-based communities where there are limited employment opportunities for women. Their personal well-being and confidence in their knowledge of health matters will have positive effects on the entire family.

Attendance as high as 56 women to the WHEP workshops, say the co-ordinators, indicates that the desire for more health information am-

ong women in Northwestern Ontario is prevalent, as is the desire to take a more active role in one's health.

The target communities where the women were surveyed were:

Atikokan, Dryden, Fort Frances, Geraldton, Kenora, Longlac, Manitowadge, Marathon, Nakina, Nipigon, Pickle Lake, Red Lake, Sioux Lookout, Terrace Bay and rural Thunder Bay.

Copies of the survey will be made available to interested women and will be distributed to groups and agencies this Fall, highlighting the recommendations that pertain to each one.

Prospectors - Exploration Companies: Schreiber-Terrace Bay-Marathon

The Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources will provide an Economic Geologist to visit, assay and advise you on the potential of any mineral occurrence you may have staked, or know the location of in the Schreiber-Terrace Bay-Marathon Areas. This service is provided free of charge. The Schreiber-Terrace Bay-Marathon economic Geologist program encompasses an area from Nipigon east to Marathon. This program is funded by the Ministry of Northern Affairs. For Further Information Call (Collect):

Bernie Schnieders or Allan Speed
Resident Geologist's Office
Ministry of Natural Resources
Thunder Bay
(807) 475-1331



Ministry of
Natural
Resources

Hon. Alan W. Pope
Minister

John R. Sloan
Deputy Minister

The Classroom

While we sat with sun streaming in,
There was no need for light.
For with beams to light the way
There was no darkness
Except in the minds of those
Who sit sleeping, dreaming.
Yet still others sit pondering
The views thrown in the air.
And others seem to have volume
With their voices to break the air.
Yet one strong voice controls all small
whispers.

Beth Fellinger

A NEW PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION

to help Disabled and Seniors live at home.

Why was this new program introduced?

“Many elderly and disabled people want to live with their families. However, in some cases, providing shelter requires extensive home renovations which result in increased property taxes. We must encourage—not penalize—families for their efforts to provide shelter and supportive care.”

Accordingly, I am announcing today that homeowners who undertake renovations or additions, specifically to keep an elderly or disabled person at home and in the community, will be exempt from any increase in taxable assessment that would otherwise occur.”

Budget Statement—May 15, 1984, The Honourable Larry Grossman, Q.C., Treasurer of Ontario.

Does the program involve direct financial assistance for alterations? No. The savings are in reduced property taxes each year, not in grants or loans for alterations. Under this program, the assessed value of the improvements will not be included when your property tax is calculated, providing the improvements were made to help a disabled or senior live at home.

Who can apply? Any property owner who makes improvements to accommodate people who are 65 or over and those of any age with physical or mental disabilities that would otherwise require them to live in an institution.

Can only the family of a disabled or senior person apply for this exemption? Not necessarily. For example, you may wish to make improvements to accommodate a friend in your home. Moreover, disabled or seniors can apply for the exemption directly, if they make alterations that will enable them to continue living in their own homes.

What about group homes? Non-profit group homes can apply, but only as long as their improved accommodations do not exceed three residential units. Larger institutions operating multiple facilities to care for the disabled or seniors are not included in this program.

Can commercial properties qualify? Yes, in some cases. For example, a family operating a retail store could

apply for the exemption if they make improvements to an apartment upstairs for the accommodation of a family member or friend who would otherwise be compelled to live in an institution.

What types of home improvements qualify? Any addition, improvement or alteration specifically related to the needs of the disabled or senior resident qualifies for this new exemption. These may include such features as special bathroom modifications or additions to an existing home. (Please note: general repairs and maintenance do not increase assessment anyway.)

Does the exemption apply to changes underway or completed before the program was announced? Only alterations started after May 15, 1984 when the program was announced will qualify for the property tax exemption once the work has been completed.

How long will the exemption apply? The tax exemption continues as long as the senior or disabled person uses the property as their principal residence.

How do you receive this new property tax exemption? The first step is to call your local Assessment Office at the number listed below. To avoid any possible disappointment, please contact us before finalizing your plans. We look forward to discussing the program in greater detail.

Please talk to your local Assessment Office. We're anxious to help.

KENORA, RAINY RIVER, THUNDER BAY
REGIONAL ASSESSMENT OFFICE
115 Johnson Avenue
THUNDER BAY, Ontario P7B 2V9
(807) 345-1221 Zenith 50960
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