

# Terrace Bay - Schreiber

# NEWS

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SERVING TERRACE BAY, SCHREIBER, ROSSPORT & JACKFISH LAKE

## Elimination of OHIP premiums

### *Greatly improves access to all Provinciual Residents*

Provincial Treasurer Robert Nixon announced in his May 1989 budget that health care premium revenue will be replaced by the Employer Health Tax on Jan. 1, 1990.

During the transition to the Employer Health Tax, all Ontario residents will be covered for the health services they need. All OHIP subscribers are expected to make their premium payments up to Dec. 31, 1989.

All existing Ontario health insurance numbers remain unchanged, and subscribers should continue to use their current identification. As long as they remain residents of Ontario, their coverage will remain valid and premium free after Dec. 31.

Subscribers should contact their nearest Ministry of Health office directly if there is a change in their family status or address.

For further information concerning health insurance call:  
Maurice Jones, Toronto  
Communications and  
Information Branch  
Ministry of Health  
Phone: (416) 965-5167

For further information concerning tax policy call:  
Steve Orsini, Toronto  
Ministry of Treasury  
Phone (416) 965-8495

For further information concerning revenue collection call:  
Jim Evans, Oshawa  
Ministry of Revenue

Phone: (416) 436-4525

#### Question and Answers

Q: When will premium payments end?

A: On Dec. 31, 1989.

Q: Will my Health Coverage continue after Dec. 31?

A: Yes.

Q: What happens when I go to the Doctor or the Hospital?

A: If you are a resident of Ontario, you will have the same access to the health care system as you did during the time when premiums were collected.

Q: Why is the premium system being changed?

A: The Government of Ontario and committees such as the Social Assistance Review Committee have all recommended that the premium system be abolished.

The Social Assistance Review Committee believed that the elimination of premiums was essential and would greatly improve access to health care for many low-income people.

Premiums are a regressive form of taxation that hurts the poor, even though excellent assistance programs for help in paying premiums were available.

Historically, the funding for health care has been shared by people and business. Each real-

izes benefits from Ontario's universal health care system. The introduction of the Employer Health Tax will ensure that all employers contribute a share of the financing of health care. This is a more reasonable approach than the current patchwork that has many employers paying all premiums for their employees, and others contributing nothing at all.

Q: How will I be covered if I'm unemployed?

A: After the end of December, all Ontario residents, whether unemployed, employed, self-employed or retired, are eligible for coverage. The sole criterion for eligibility will be residency -- you must ordinarily be present in Ontario, entitled to remain in Canada, and make your home in Ontario.

Q: I live in Ontario, but work in Detroit (Hull). How am I covered?

A: Health insurance coverage is based on residency in Ontario and not on the place of employment. As long as you remain a resident of Ontario, you will continue to be eligible for insured health services.

Q: I live in Detroit (Hull), but work in Windsor (Ottawa). Will I be covered?

A: If you are not a resident, you are not eligible.

Q: What about Canadians moving to Ontario from other provinces? When will they be covered?

A: Coverage will commence from the date their coverage under their previous provincial plan expires. If their date of arrival in Ontario is prior to Jan. 1, 1990, they will be required to make premium payments.

Since premiums now paid by an employer are added to an employee's T-4 slip as a taxable benefit, will the employee no longer have to pay income tax on the amount of that benefit?

A: The Employer Health Tax is not a taxable benefit; as of 1990 the employee will not be required to pay income tax on that amount.

Q: Will the new system affect those over 65?

A: The elimination of premiums means that persons turning 65 will no longer have to apply for exemption from premiums. However, they must still register at 65 for the Ontario Drug Benefit Plan.

Q: How will the new system affect company benefit plans that also include private and semi-private hospital benefits?

A: Private supplementary insurance coverage won't be affected by the elimination of premiums.

# 911 Saves Lives

## Will it save ours?

Quick action by 911 Emergency Response Teams has saved thousands of lives since the 911 number was first introduced for all purpose emergency calling more than 20 years ago. Unfortunately, half of Canada's population does not have access to this number and those in trouble must rely on the old seven digit emergency call system.

Gilles Pouliot, MPP for Lake Nipigon, told the Ontario Legislature that most communities in his riding are unable to establish or maintain the 911 emergency system simply because of excessive cost. "Municipalities need provincial assistance to get the system up and running. It simply isn't acceptable to deny half the population access to a nation wide initiative which saves lives," said Pouliot.

Pouliot refused to accept the Solicitor General's response to his concern and insisted that remote, outlying communities should be given priority for the system because of the isolation factor which makes their need for a quick response much more acute.



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## Happy New Year

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