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Rights Online

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Human Rights Issues Facing Older Ontarians

This fall the Ontario Human Rights Commission will hold public hearings on human rights issues facing older persons.

"Older persons face a number of human rights issues related to employment, health care, housing and transportation services that need to be explored," remarked Chief Commissioner Keith Norton in a statement announcing the start of the consultation, which will be complete at the end of the year.

The Chief has noted that, "It is the Commission's role to flag emerging human rights concerns. With our aging population there are compelling reasons for rethinking attitudes towards aging and how we approach age discrimination."

The hearings were launched with a call for written submissions on the issues raised in the Commission's [Consultation Paper](#) and public hearings across the province starting in November. The information gathered from submissions and the public hearings will be used for policy development in this area over the next two years.

For more information:

- **Backgrounder:**
[Ontario Human Rights Commission Releases Consultation Paper On Age](#), September 25, 2000
- **Consultation Paper:**
[The changing face of Ontario: Discrimination and our Aging Population](#)
- **Discussion Paper:**
[Discrimination and Age: Human Rights Issues](#)

Commission News

Legal Decisions

Review a selected list of current [Board of Inquiry decisions](#)

Filing a Complaint

Do you have a human rights complaint? Have a look at our [Complainant's Guide](#)

Our staff suggests these noteworthy human rights sites

- [The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union](#)
(English and French)
- [International Journal of Transgenderism](#)
(English only)
- [Canadian Race Relations Foundation](#)
(English and French)
- [Ontario Courts](#)
(English and French)

[Facing Older Persons in Ontario](#)

- **News Releases:**

- [Human Rights Commission Kicks Off Consultations on Human Rights Issues Facing Older Persons](#),

- September 25, 2000

- [Human Rights Commission Launches Review of Age Discrimination](#), July 27, 2000



Commission's Accomplishments for 1999-2000 Reviewed

On September 1st, 2000 the OHRC released its [Annual Report](#) for the period April 1, 1999 to March 31, 2000.

For the forth-consecutive year, the Commission had resolved more cases (2,305) than it opened (1,861). Said the Chief Commissioner, "we are achieving a current caseload - for the first time in anyone's recent memory."

The Annual Report highlights the Commission's commitment to increasing public understanding of human rights issues through public education. Commission staff participated in 108 public education events and delivered education and training to over 8,600 people, nearly double the number of people who received training from Commission staff last year (4,500).

Successes in case management and public education have raised interest around the world. In 1999-2000 the Commission continued to play a leadership role in the promotion of human rights on the national and international stage. Delegations were received from South Africa, Nigeria, Chile, India, Sri Lanka, Japan and the United Nations High Commission for Human Rights.

1999-2000 also marked the launch of several plain language guides intended to make information on human rights issues accessible to the general public. Key among these was Human Rights at Work, a publication that addresses workplace issues, such as accommodating persons with disabilities, anti-discrimination and harassment policies, rights for pregnant employees and benefits for same-sex partners.

Other Commission successes in 1999-2000 include:

- A drop in the average age of cases to 13 months from 20 months a few years ago.
- An increase in the number of cases referred to the Board of Inquiry, an independent tribunal appointed to decide human rights cases brought before the Commission.
- Triple the number of complaints (92) sent to the Board of Inquiry than in previous years.

For more information:

- [Annual Report 1999-2000](#)



OHRC Protects Transgendered People

This past summer, the Ontario Human Rights Commission took a leadership role in the protection of transgendered people. The Commission's [Policy on Discrimination and Harassment because of Gender Identity](#) explains the protections available to transgendered persons under the Ontario Human Rights Code.

The policy extends protection to transgendered people under the ground of sex. It confirms, at a policy level, what courts across the country have been saying for some time: transgendered people have the right to equal treatment without discrimination.

The release of the policy in June concludes two years of work by the Commission on this issue. "I made a commitment two years ago that policy work would be developed specifically for this community and we have now fulfilled our commitment," remarked Chief Norton. The Policy was developed as a result of the severe marginalization and stigma experienced by transgendered persons, which was reported to the Commission during public consultations held in 1998.

The consultations led to a [discussion paper](#) on the issue of gender identity that was published in October 1999. The paper was based on research, community consultations and interviews with selected officials and health professionals. The paper canvassed jurisprudence, domestic and international legislation, literature, and other human rights organizations' policies.

The term 'transgendered' refers to people who are not comfortable with or who reject, in whole or in part, their birth-assigned gender identities. It includes transsexuals, cross-dressers and intersexed individuals.

The Policy seeks to:

- Ensure that all people are protected by the Code;
- Promote the dignity and equality of those whose gender identity does not conform to social norms;
- Raise awareness of gender identity to prevent discrimination and harassment; and
- Dispel stereotypes and myths that foster discrimination and harassment.

For further information:

- **Policy:**
[Policy on Discrimination and Harassment because of Gender Identity](#)
- **News release:**
[Ontario Human Rights Commission Releases Policy on Gender Identity](#)

OHRC and CASSA Partner to Produce Complainant's Guide in Six South Asian Languages

The Commission and the [Council of Agencies Serving South Asians](#) (CASSA) have come together to produce [Human Rights in Ontario: A Complainant's Guide](#) in six languages: Urdu, Punjabi, Gujarati, Bengali, Tamil, Hindi, English and French.

The partnership is recognition that the South Asian community is one of the fastest growing and largest communities in the Greater Toronto Area. The Commission thanks Uzma Shakir, CASSA's Acting National Director for helping the Commission meet the needs of the South Asian community for human rights information.

The Commission has worked with several community organizations in the past to deliver public education and create public awareness campaigns.

The publications will be available to the public free of charge from Publications Ontario, the CASSA office, CASSA members and at the OHRC.

For further information:

- Uzma Shakir, 979-8611
- Please see the CASSA Newsletter at: <http://www.cassa.on.ca>



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