

Bike Helmets - It's the law!

Yvonne Hutton, CLW, Atikokan

No one likes to wear them, but research has shown that bike helmets are an extremely effective tool in preventing head injuries in cycling accidents. Approximately three-quarters of all cycling deaths involve head injuries!

The Ontario helmet law came into effect October 1, 1995 and was intended to reduce the incidence of head injuries in cyclists. Originally intended for *all* bike riders of *any* age, the law was amended before it came into effect making adults over the age of 18 exempt. The law states that if you are under 18 years of age you are

required by law to wear an approved bicycle helmet when travelling on any public road.



**No helmet = no ride
for everyone!**

The penalty for not wearing a helmet is applied directly to youth ages 16 and 17, and to the parents of children under 16 years of age. The base fine is \$60, but with

additional court costs the total fine becomes \$75.00.

A child riding a tricycle must wear a helmet, as well as children riding in bike carriers or bike trailers.

Enforcing a "no helmet-no ride" rule with children starting from a young age helps to reinforce wearing helmets when "no one is watching". Children are more likely to wear their helmets if adult caregivers are also wearing them.

Anyone operating an electric bike (e-bike) of any age is required to wear a bike helmet at all times.

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Northern Health Travel Grants

Carol Grosset, OM, Kenora

As of December 1, 2012, the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care requires that **accommodation (hotel) receipts that include the name of the patient/guardian as the guest**, be submitted with the travel grant application. If a receipt is not submitted, reimbursement will be for the "travel allowance" only.

To prevent delays in processing your Northern Health Travel Grant application by having it sent back to you, the following tips should be kept in mind:

- read application instructions to ensure you meet all requirements
- is travel for OHIP insured purposes
- do you qualify for reimbursement from other agencies, ie WSIB
- ensure grant is completed legibly and in full
- signed by patient or guardian
- northern referring provider information is complete and signed
- specialist/health facility provider information is complete and signed



- enclose applicable tickets for commercial travel
- enclose accommodation receipt booked in patient/guardian's name
- submit application within 12 months of appointment date

If you have any questions or concerns, visit the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care's website:

<http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/public/publication/ohip/northern.aspx> or contact the Northern Health Travel Grant office in Sudbury at 1-800-461-4006.

Registered Disability Savings Plan - It adds up!

Fay Clark, CLW, Kenora

A **Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP)** is a means for people with disabilities to save money. RDSP's do not affect asset levels of those on Ontario Disability Support Program Benefits (ODSP). To establish an RDSP, a person must first qualify for the federal Disability Tax Credit (DTC) by proving that they have a "severe and prolonged mental or physical impairment" and be under the age of 60 (if you are 59, you must apply before the end of the calendar year in which you turned 59). Applications for RDSP's are

made through the Canada Revenue Agency.

If you have an RDSP, are under the age of 49 (up to the end of the calendar year in which you turn 49), and depending on your (or your families' if you are under 18) income, you may also be eligible for federally provided grants and bonds. Applications for both programs are made through the bank where the RDSP is held.

The **Canada Disability Savings Grant** is a matching grant that the government will match up to 300% of the money deposited into your RDSP. The maximum grant is \$3,500 each year, with a lifetime limit of

\$70,000.

The **Canada Disability Savings Bond** does not require any personal contributions to your RDSP. The government will place up to \$1000 per year, depending on income, into your RDSP with a lifetime limit of \$20,000. Unused grant and bond entitlements from the previous 10 years (starting from 2008) can be claimed for RDSP's opened January 2011 or later. To apply for unused grant and bond entitlements, you must currently be financially eligible. For more information contact the legal clinic or Service Canada.

Our Pamphlet Stands

All three offices of the Northwest Community Legal Clinic carry a large supply of pamphlets relating to areas of law within the Clinic Mandate. We invite you to call or stop into your local office to view the selection.

Social Security Tribunal

Sallie Hunt, Staff Lawyer, Kenora

The new Social Security Tribunal (SST) is a single decision-making body that consolidates the work previously done by four separate HRSDC tribunals – the Office of the Commission of Review

Tribunals for CPP and OAS matters, the Pension Appeals Board (PAB), the EI Board of Referees and the EI Umpire.

As of April 1, 2013, all appeals for EI, CPP and



OAS must be submitted to the SST. The first year will be a transition period. During this time, the SST will hear all new appeals while the four tribunals finalize cases already in their systems.

Team Celebrations

We know that our team members: staff, board and volunteers, are terrific people. It seems that others are recognizing their special spirit in the community also. Trudy McCormick, our executive director, has been re-elected as Co-Chair of

the ACLCO. Her dedication during these changing times has kept the organization focused on the needs of the legal clinic system and ultimately, the citizens we serve. Volunteerism awards were bestowed by the Ministry of Citizenship on staff

lawyer, Sallie Hunt, and on our long serving board member, Margaret Hulagrocki. Nan Normand, community legal worker, was featured on an Inspiring Women poster that circulated the community as part of International Women's Day celebrations.

Waiting

Nan Normand, CLW, Kenora

Somewhere within our region, someone at this moment is complaining about a health care wait issue. This subject is almost as popular as the weather. Like the weather, we always believe that it is better someplace else. Here's some research that contradicts our beliefs about health care wait times.

Everyone who has ever waited in the emergency department for care is convinced that the speed of service is better elsewhere. Provincially a patient with a major complex health issue will wait 5.4 hours for treatment while

minor issues are handled within 2.1 hours. At the Lake of the Woods District Hospital patients will average a 4.2 hour (major) and 2.8 hour (minor) wait.

Welland, a comparative hospital in Southern Ontario has an 8.6 hour wait for treatment of complex medical conditions. In Kenora, referrals for Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) scans are achieved faster than anywhere else in the province (78 days). Waiting for cancer surgery is terrifying but our area's service time is 37 days which is



less than half of the provincial target (82 days). Hip and knee replacements are close to the provincial target. Another common health issue for our

aging population is cataracts. Locally, our citizens will obtain treatment in about 103 days.

This good news may be reassuring to the statisticians but no parent with a crying child waiting in emergency will relax with these numbers. A wait is always a wait and in a world in which we have become used to instant service, we will continue to protest any wait.

P.A.R.T.Y. Program

Debra Bruyere, Support, Atikokan

The Atikokan Safe and Healthy Lifestyles Committee, (A.S.H.L.S.) which is comprised of a number of agencies in Atikokan including the Northwest Community Legal Clinic, organized a presentation of the Prevent Alcohol and Risk-Related Trauma in Youth (P.A.R.T.Y.) program to the Atikokan High School grade 10 students.

The P.A.R.T.Y. program was developed at the Sunnybrook Health Science Centre in Toronto in January 1986. The program has been delivered to over one million young people world wide and growing.

Thanks to the generous donations from companies, agencies and organizations in Atikokan, the A.S.H.L.S. was able to raise enough

money to bring the program to the students with the assistance of the Fort Frances P.A.R.T.Y. program.



This full day session takes the students through an injury from the occurrence, through transport, treatment, rehabilitation and community re-integration phases. The P.A.R.T.Y. program is designed to educate youth about the impact and

effect of trauma and to encourage them to make smart choices. The students interact with paramedics, emergency responders, police officers, fire and rescue personnel, and health professionals including nurses, physicians and physiotherapists.

On May 3rd, the students attended a full day session at the Atikokan General Hospital. The presenters did an excellent job at conveying their experience, knowledge and heartfelt stories. At the end of the day Sergeant Anne McCoy and Ryan Mosley shared very personal stories making this experience very relevant to our community. More information is available on the P.A.R.T.Y. program website at www.partyprogram.com.

GASP! Alert for hydro one Customers

We have been gasping our way up the utility rocket for several years now. Within the next few months, you may have an unexpectedly high bill. Due to a systems change, there will be an extra 18 days of energy consumption

on your Hydro One invoice. The new Customer Information System has been designed to eliminate the gap between the electricity usage and the issuing of the account. As a result of the switch over, there will be a higher

bill for one month. To ease the financial hardship, Hydro One will divide the 18 days consumption into six equal interest free payments. If you have any questions call Hydro One at 1-877-543-3797.



Does your group require accessible meeting space in Fort Frances or Kenora during regular office hours? Please contact our office to discuss.



**Supporting individuals and our community
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Office Closures

Monday, July 1st - Canada Day
Monday, August 5th - Civic Holiday
Monday, September 2nd - Labour Day

Sub-Offices

Red Lake- August 7th, September 11
Ear Falls - August 8th, September 12



Consider the environment...

Please recycle this newsletter!

Northwestern Health Unit

*This issue, we feature the **Northwestern Health Unit**. Thanks to Christine McLeod for contributing the following article...*

Congratulations! One of the most important things you can do for your health is quit tobacco and there is no better time than right now. If you've tried to quit before, you know that it is not an easy thing to do. It takes the average smoker multiple tries before they quit for good. But each attempt teaches you something – use the things you learned the next time you quit to make it successful.

There are some things you can do to prepare yourself to quit smoking. Setting a quit date that is meaningful to you and within a short time frame (about a month) will boost

your desire to quit and will give you time to get ready. As you get closer to your quit date, delay your first cigarette each day and try to reduce the number of times you smoke throughout the day.

When your quit date arrives and you begin your tobacco-free lifestyle, remember the 4 D's:

- Delay** – most cravings will pass in a few minutes. Tell yourself this and control the impulse to smoke.
- Distract** – take your mind off smoking by thinking of something else to do. Take action against urges!
- Deep Breathe** – breathe in slowly and deeply and then breathe out. This mimics that actual motion of smoking and will help you feel calmer and more in control.
- Drink Water** – take a sip of water and



**Northwestern
Health Unit**

www.nwhu.on.ca

hold it in your mouth before swallowing. This can also help with the hand to mouth action of smoking. Asking a friend or a family member to act as your quit buddy will also help when you need that little extra support and encouragement.

If you have a relapse, don't worry! It is normal to slip – just remember to get back on track and stick to the things that work for you. When you are successfully tobacco-free, reward yourself! You have just accomplished something that will benefit you for the rest of your life.

For self-help resources to help you quit, such as quit kits, brochures and workbooks, visit your local Northwestern Health Unit office or call the Smokers' Helpline at 1-877-513-5333 for more information and support.

DISCLAIMER: *These articles provide information only and are not to be considered as legal advice. Content reflects the laws that were current at the time of publication and the law may have since changed. Consult your community legal clinic or legal representative for legal advice on your specific situation.*