



WOMEN OF INSPIRATION

Offering Support, Knowledge Transfer & Education
and Outreach to Women Injured at Work

April 22, 2020

Dear Friends and Allies,

Re: Universal Workers Compensation Coverage and the COVID Pandemic

The Women of Inspiration (WOI) is an injured worker activist group. We strongly believe that all Ontario workers should be covered under the umbrella of the workers' compensation (WSIB) system in the event of workplace injury. This has become even more obvious and true in context of the COVID pandemic society is experiencing currently. ***We are writing to ask you to endorse the letter of our friend and WOI member, Maryam Nazemi, calling on the government to immediately enact universal coverage of workers' compensation.***

Recently, the WSIB re-structured its coverage whereby it created a very long list of industries that it explicitly excluded from being covered under the WSIB system. In our view, this was the wrong approach. It was a missed opportunity to correct the gaps in workers' compensation coverage. Job classes in several vulnerable occupations are now still left without coverage.

In particular, without protection of the WSIB system, there are many vulnerable essential service workers putting themselves at risk during the current pandemic. For example, many professionals such as cleaners, truck drivers and delivery workers to name a few are now officially and socially recognized as very important in keeping us all safe and yet surprising the WSIB undervalues and disregard these workers by not covering them. As such, most of these workers are not covered under the WSIB system. In this time of crisis, who are we least able to do without – the grocery store worker or the billionaire hedge fund manager? Who is doing more for our society at this peak time of crisis? Let's value and respect the skills of the people who are doing essential work in these times of crisis, by offering protection under the umbrella of the WSIB.

This pandemic knows no boundaries, and neither should our capacity for compassion and care for our fellow human beings. It's scandalous that in a province as rich as ours there are essential workers risking their lives on a daily basis without the comfort of

knowing they will be protected and cared for in case they become affected with the COVID-19 disease or another workplace injury. The old trade union slogan goes “an injury to one is an injury to all, united we stand divided we fall”. It’s inspiring to see people coming together all over the province and showing compassion in the face of adversity – let’s come together as a community and demand the same from our governing bodies. It’s that spirit that will move our Province forward after this crisis; let’s move society in the right direction by demanding of our leaders take steps to protect every last member of society is protected and looked after.

We hope that the takeaway from this moment in time is that our society can be defined by solidarity and compassion rather than fear and inequality. We ask that you lend your support to this mountainous goal of helping to bring about universal coverage to all Ontario workers and workplaces.

You can do this by writing to Premier Doug Ford (premier@ontario.ca) to say:

The time to enact universal coverage in workers’ compensation is now! We endorse the attached letter of Maryam Nazemi from the Women of Inspiration injured workers group and ask that you take immediate steps to cover all workers under the WSIB system.

In Solidarity

Per:

Women of Inspiration

Audrey Parkes & Kathrin Furniss

c/o Injured Workers Community Legal Clinic
815 Danforth Ave, Suite 411, Toronto, Ontario M4J 1L2
Phone: (416) 461-2411 Fax: (416) 461-7138