BC PROVINCIAL CUTS TO

INFORMATION ACCURATE AS OF APRIL 10, 2002

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN affects women's physical and mental health. It is one of the primary causes of injury to women, often requiring emergency and long-term health care. Women who experience violence are at higher risk for mental health problems. Often, the health effects of violence are further exacerbated when women struggle to seek help from the health care system. The full impact of the cuts on women experiencing violence will not fully be known until the Health Authorities in the province share their health plans. However, in the following fact sheet we document what is currently known. The current cuts compromise the health care system's ability to respond appropriately to women who experience violence, which in turn may increase morbidity and mortality rates across the province.

The BC Liberal government has publicly stated that it is committed to implementing the BC Mental Health Plan and to maintaining current levels of funding for mental health. However, this does not take into account inflation and the rise in need from the community while the government simultaneously

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cuts spending to acute and community health care. This disruption in the continuum of care has the potential to impact on women who have experienced violence. Such women who already have difficulties in receiving adequate mental health support and treatment and has the potential to place further pressure on emergency rooms (Varcoe, 2001). Further, the Liberal government has eliminated the provincial mental health advocate and given the regional health authorities more say in how they spend their budgets. This means that health authorities may be in a position of moving monies normally allocated to mental health into the general health budget. Finally, changes to disability benefits and particularly to eligibility criteria will have an impact on women with disabilities, chronic illnesses and/or mental health problems.

HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES



INFORMATION

BC Institute Against Family Violence (604) 669-7055 1-877-755-7055 (toll free)

BC Association of Specialized Victim **Assistance and Counselling Programs** (604) 633-2506

BC/Yukon Society of Transition Houses (604) 669-6943

RESOURCES

Government of British Columbia,

Centres bcwomen

page

	HEALTH			Minister of Finanace
	CUTS, POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE CHANGES	IMPACT: KNOWN AND POTENTIAL		www.bcbudget.gov.bc.ca
	Three year freeze on increases to health spending.	This has the potential to impact on a variety of health service areas and may prevent the development of new programs and services for women		PovNet www.povnet.org BC Coalition of Women's C www3.telus.net/bcwomen/b
	As of March 31, 2002, Women's Health Bureau and Office for Seniors has been eliminated.	Loss of these offices means a marginalization of women's health issues and less capacity for supporting community programs, and prevention education initiatives related to violence issues.		Access Justice www.accessjustice.ca
	As of March 31, 2002, the Minister's Advisory Council on Women's Health (MAC) was eliminated.	The loss of a specific advisory council on women's health means that the government no longer has this body of expertise that included projects on violence against women to rely on in developing policy and guidelines for women's health.		Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives www.policyalternatives.ca/bo BC Coalition of People with Disabilities
		CONTINUED		www.bccpd.bc.ca
ΗE	ALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES: ANTIC	IPATED IMPACT ON WOMEN WHO EXPERIENCE V	/IOL	ENCE

PREPARED BY THE RESEARCH ADVISORY ON THE PROVINCIAL CUTS AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

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CUTS, POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE CHANGES

Reduction in the number of Health Authorities and more flexibility ϖ autonomy in how Health Authorities allocate funds to mental health.

The reduction in Regional Health Authorities will impact on rural communities by centralizing control of mental health services in urban centres. Regional health authorities will have increased say over how much of their health budgets are allocated to mental health. This may mean the loss of some programs which impact on women who are survivors of violence.

IMPACT: KNOWN AND POTENTIAL