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## Announcements

SWAN offers a **monthly drop – in advocacy clinic** for women working in massage parlors the 3rd Friday of every month. Fall 2012 clinics - September 21, October 19, November 16 and December 21 and will continue in 2013. We can help with health, immigration, employment, housing, legal, social services, family, community referrals and resources and general problem solving. Support is provided in a private and secure location. We will not ask for information you do not want to share including your name, immigration status or work details. All your information will remain confidential. Contact SWAN for more details.

## VOLUNTEER WITH SWAN

SWAN is looking for volunteers! Details at [www.swanvancouver.ca](http://www.swanvancouver.ca) or call 604 719 6343

## Getting Connected



### Spotlight on Community Agency BCCDC Outreach Nurse Program

SWAN talked to outreach nurse Yasmin Winsor and asked her about outreach nursing in massage parlours.

**SWAN:** What health care services do you provide women working in massage parlors?

**Yasmin:** We provide emergency contraception, pap smears and HIV and STI (sexually transmitted infections) testing. For HIV, syphilis and hepatitis, we do a blood test. For gonorrhea and chlamydia, we do a urine test. For a pap smear, we do an internal exam. STI results take 1 week and pap smear results take 6 weeks. We do an HIV instant test and the woman can get the results in a minute. We follow up and provide medication if necessary. We also provide sexual health education, for example information on HIV and STIs, contraception and condom use.

**SWAN:** Are the services confidential?

**Yasmin:** Yes. A woman does not need to provide her real name and she doesn't have to have a health card. The results are kept confidential between the woman and the nurse.

**SWAN:** What areas can you visit?

**Yasmin:** We can visit massage parlours in Vancouver, Burnaby and Richmond.

If translation is needed, we can visit with a SWAN member. Women can also visit our clinics. Our drop-in clinic at 1170 Bute St. (West End) is open 11:00am-6:30pm, Monday – Friday. Our clinic at 655 West 12th is open Monday – Saturday (hours vary). Call 604-707-5600 for an appointment.

**SWAN:** Is there anything else you would like women working in massage parlours to know about the outreach nurses?

**Yasmin:** We also provide support to women who have been sexually assaulted. Sexual assault is wrong and it is illegal. We provide emotional support and medication to prevent pregnancy and

## What is SWANzine

This newsletter is a guide to health, legal, employment, immigration and community information for women working in massage parlours in the Lower Mainland. English and Chinese versions are available. If you require the SWANzine translated in another language, please contact us.

STIs. We also provide support and referral to the Vancouver General Hospital Sexual Assault Service where a woman can go for treatment up to 7 days after the assault. If a woman would like to go to the police, we can assist her to do that. If a woman decides she does not want to go to the police or hospital that is ok too. We can still support her.

**SWAN:** Thank you Yasmin and thank you for all the work the outreach nurses do!

To see an outreach nurse call 604-707-2790 or call SWAN 604 719 6343 and we can help you arrange a visit.



Note: Some massage parlours may be visited by nurses from the AESHA research study who are different from the BCCDC nurses.

Employment Information

Looking for a second job or looking for a change and would like to do something different?

In April 2012, the Government of British Columbia changed how it offers employment services and created new 'one-stop shopping' employment centers throughout the province. New WorkBC Employment Services Centres integrate all services that are offered through a single door which makes it easier to help people find work. Unemployed British Columbians with a wide range of employment-related needs, skills, education, experience and circumstances are eligible to receive Employment Program of BC services.

The first step in accessing the Employment Program of B.C.'s employment services and supports is to contact a WorkBC Employment Services Centre near you. SWAN can offer support when setting up, preparing for and/or attending an appointment at a WorkBC Employment Services Centre.

WorkBC Employment Services Centre Locations:

Richmond

#290 – 3631 No 3 Road
778-732-0285
www.letsgetbctowork.ca

Vancouver South

5750 Oak St
604-263-5005
www.ywcjobseeker.org

Vancouver Midtown

110 – 112 East 3rd Ave
604-829-2300
www.pcrs.ca

Vancouver Westside

300/301 2150 West Broadway
604-688-4666
www.ywcjobseeker.org

Vancouver Northeast

312–2555 Commercial Dr
604-708-9300
www.mosaicbc.com

Burnaby

726 - 4710 Kingsway
604-430-5627
www.gthiringsolutions.ca

For other Vancouver & Burnaby locations, go to
http://www.workbc.ca/Work-BC-Centres/Pages/Interactive-Map.aspx

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Employment assistance is also available at JobOptions BC. JobOptions BC offers up to 10 weeks of programming, short-term training and work experience that prepares participants for new employment or further training.

JobOptions BC locations:

Richmond

Richmond Youth Service Agency
604-271-7600 Ext 684

Vancouver

Coast Foundation Society
604-877-0033

Burnaby

S.U.C.C.E.S.S.
604-438-2100

Vancouver

Immigrant Services Society
604-684-2561 Ext1135

Vancouver

Mosaic
604-708-9300

Burnaby

Mosaic
604-636-4712

For more information, contact SWAN (one of SWAN's English/Cantonese speaking volunteers is involved with this program and can act as a bridge between you and this service) or go to http://www.jti.gov.bc.ca/job\_options\_bc/

Free English classes

Richmond

Richmond Multicultural Community Services
210 - 7000 Minoru Boulevard
604 279 7160
Beginner: Tuesday 9:30am – 12pm
Intermediate: Thursday 6pm – 8pm
Advanced: Tuesday 9:30am – 12pm

Vancouver

Collingwood Neighbourhood House
5288 Joyce St. 604 435 0323
Sundays 1pm-3pm English Corner

Britannia Community Services Centre
1661 Napier St. 604 718 5800
Tuesdays 10am-2:30pm

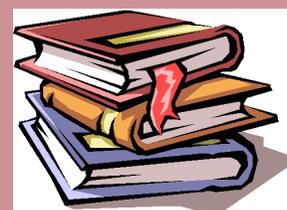
ESL Learning Centre- Britannia Library
Drop-in program
Tuesday- Saturday during library hours

South Vancouver Neighborhood House 6470 Victoria Drive
604-324-6212
Beginners Thursdays 6:30pm-8:30pm
Intermediate Thursday 1pm-3pm

Burnaby

Burnaby Multicultural Society
6255 Nelson Ave.
604 431-4131
Tuesdays & Thursdays 10am-12pm

If these classes are not in your area, please contact SWAN to help you locate a class or go to www.elsanet.org for more classes.



**Update on Prostitution Laws****British Columbia**

On September 21, 2012 the Supreme Court of Canada ruled a group of Vancouver sex workers (called Downtown Eastside Sex Workers United Against Violence) and a former sex worker can challenge the country's prostitution laws. The ruling means the group can proceed with their legal fight, arguing that prostitution laws violate the constitutional rights of sex trade workers to liberty, safety, equality, freedom of association and expression. The decision will mean increased access to justice for sex workers and for many other marginalized groups who have been unable to bring human rights challenges before the courts.

**Ontario**

In 2010, the Superior Court of Ontario struck down three sex worker related laws (s. 210 'Common bawdy house'; s. 212 (1)(j) 'Living on the avails'; and s. 213 (1)(c) 'Communicating for the purposes of prostitution') and ruled that these laws violate the right to liberty and security that is guaranteed in Section 7 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. In March 2012, the Ontario Court of Appeal agreed that the bans on bawdy houses and living off the avails of prostitution are unconstitutional, but did not strike down the Communicating law, which prohibits public communication for the purpose of prostitution. This ruling has been appealed to the Supreme Court of Canada. The Supreme Court of Canada will decide in the fall of 2012 if it agrees to hear the appeal. At present, the laws related to sex work remain in force and will remain so until the Supreme Court hears the appeal and renders a decision.

**The Law & You**

Recent challenges to federal prostitution laws and policy change being discussed at the municipal level in the City of Vancouver will affect your work in the coming years. Here is an update of changes that will impact you.

**Vancouver Police Department's Approach to Sex Work: The Sex Work Enforcement Guidelines**

In March 2012, the VPD submitted the "Sex Work Enforcement Guidelines" for approval by the Police Board. The Vancouver Police Board is expected to approve these guidelines in November 2012, at which point it will become official policy. Prepared with the help of sex work support organizations, the Guidelines set out the VPD's policy regarding the police response to violence against sex workers and the enforcement of sex work-related laws.

We want to highlight two key parts of the policy that should improve how the police deal with sex work related situations. First, in all situations involving sex workers, the safety and security of sex workers is the police department's priority. Second, formal enforcement action (i.e. arrest) should only be used to deal with complaints against sex workers if the situation cannot be resolved informally or it is a high-risk situation.

Relevant information for women working indoors includes:

"When responding to complaints about indoor and outdoor sex work, including complaints about "Micro Brothels" and "Independent Operators," the safety and rights of the sex worker(s) will be respected ensuring that police intervention is as non-intrusive and informal as possible in order to protect the safety, and privacy of those they are investigating."

"... officers will determine if more formal enforcement action is appropriate in cases that cannot be resolved informally or involve a high risk situation" (for example, sexually exploited children/youth, gangs/organized crime, exploitation, sexual abuse, violence, and human trafficking).

"Citizens of Vancouver involved in sex work are entitled to the same level of safety and protection under the law as are all residents of the City."

**Please note:** If you work in an area that is under RCMP jurisdiction (for example Burnaby, Richmond or Surrey), the RCMP has its own approach to sex work and the information above does not apply to you.

Sources: Vancouver Police Department. (2012). *Avoiding Future Tragedies: Improving Investigations of Missing Women . The Vancouver Police Department's Policy Forum Submission for the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry*. Retrieved from <http://vancouver.ca/police/assets/pdf/reports-policies/avoiding-future-tragedies.pdf>

Vancouver Police Department. (2012). *Administrative Report*. Board Report #1230. Retrieved from <http://vancouver.ca/police/policeboard/agenda/2012/0321/1230.pdf>

**City of Vancouver's Approach to Sex Work: An Action Plan**

In September, 2011 the City of Vancouver released a report "Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Protecting Vulnerable Adults & Neighbourhoods Affected by Sex Work: A Comprehensive Approach and Action Plan." The action plan provides a comprehensive approach to addressing sex work through improved health and safety for sex workers.

Highlights of the action plan for women working indoors include:

"Strengthen the License By-law to better protect the safety and security of sex workers at premises where there is potential for safety risks, human trafficking/exploitation."

"Review licensing regulation and enforcement practices of other jurisdictions to prevent exploitation and negative impacts of sex work on neighbourhoods."

Use City grants to influence investment in prevention, health and safety and supports for individuals to exit sex work if they choose. For more information, go to

<http://former.vancouver.ca/ctyclerk/cclerk/20110922/documents/penv4.pdf>

In June 2012, the City created a task group to implement the action plan. SWAN is a member of the task group and brings forward concerns voiced by you, the women working in massage parlours. If you have any concerns you would like to discuss, please contact SWAN at 604 719 6343 or talk to one of our outreach volunteers during their next visit to your workplace. **Please note:** The municipalities of Richmond, Burnaby, or Surrey are not involved in this initiative. If you work outside of the City of Vancouver, your city council will have a different approach to sex work.

If you are having trouble finding a service, clinic or the support you need, SWAN is here to provide assistance. Call us at 604 719 6343.

Next issue: Winter 2013. Did we miss something? SWAN would like to hear from you! If there is something you would like to see included in the next issue, please let us know!

**Immigration Law & You**

In this issue SWAN begins a regular feature on immigration law. If you have questions or would like a particular immigration issue addressed, please let us know for our next issue.

**Immigration Law & Sex Work**

Canadian employers are now blocked from hiring temporary foreign workers in sex trade-related jobs. As of July 14, 2012 Citizenship and Immigration Canada no longer processes new work permit applications for temporary foreign workers linked to sex-trade related employment. The changes are intended to prevent temporary foreign workers from taking employment as exotic dancers, in massage parlours or escort services.



**What is SWAN?**

SWAN is a non-profit organization and a group of women working to make indoor sex work safer, to inform ourselves and others about our rights, and to bring forward the opinions of women working in massage parlors and other indoor sex work sites into public policy and social services. We come from a range of direct and indirect experience with sex work and immigration, and a diverse range of languages and cultures. We use this diversity to build our network of people and organizations to support women working in massage parlors.

- We provide support, outreach and advocacy to women working in massage parlors/indoor sex work
- We help women answer questions about immigration, health, employment, legal and social issues
- We provide safe sex supplies and translated information
- We connect women to health care through our network and to the outreach nurses
- We keep an open door and an open ear to the views and needs of the women we serve
- We support women who are vulnerable to abuse, violence and exploitation



**Supporting Women's Alternatives Network (SWAN)**

outreach phone: 604-719-6343  
email: info@swanvancouver.ca | web: www.swanvancouver.ca  
mail: PO 21520 - 1424 Commercial Drive Vancouver V5L1G2

**Free Legal Advice**

**Pivot Legal Clinics**

Atira Women's Resource Society  
101 East Cordova  
By appointment only.  
(604) 331-1407  
For women only

Lifeskills Centre  
412 East Cordova

First come, first serve.  
Men and women welcome.

Go to [www.pivotlegal.org/legal\\_help](http://www.pivotlegal.org/legal_help)  
for dates and times.

Jane Doe Legal Network

If you are a woman who has experienced violence and need legal help, the Jane Doe Legal Network may be able to provide you with confidential legal advice. Contact [Darcie@pivotlegal.org](mailto:Darcie@pivotlegal.org)



Free **Refugee/Immigration** legal advice is provided by UBC law students, working under the guidance of supervising lawyers. Confidential.

Vancouver

Gordon Neighborhood House Call  
604.822.5791 to book an appointment

Surrey

PICS #205 12725 - 80th Ave Surrey  
Call 604.822.5791 to book an appointment

For more information, go to [www.lslap.bc.ca/main/](http://www.lslap.bc.ca/main/)

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**The City of Vancouver**

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**THANK YOU!**