

We are working during Covid-19, providing advice by telephone during office hours.

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## Canada Emergency Response Benefit

Fay Moore, CLW, Kenora

The Canadian Government introduced the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) in March 2020, in response to the loss of over 1-million jobs due to the COVID-19 pandemic. CERB is paid to those who have become unemployed, had a significant reduction in income due to COVID-19, or have exhausted their Employment Insurance (EI) benefits.

In response to the flood of new EI claims, the government released CERB quickly, and then moved to provide clarification of the details. As the closures from the pandemic stretch on, the details of CERB continue to evolve.

CERB is a \$500-per-week, cash benefit payable to those who became unemployed or had significantly reduced work-hours due to COVID-19 (after March 15, 2020) or for those who have received EI benefits and are not able to return to their seasonal jobs. Social assistance recipients who meet the eligibility requirements can apply for CERB (special rules apply to how the income will be treated). CERB is available to workers:

- Residing in Canada, who are at least 15 years old;
- Who have stopped working because of reasons related to COVID-19 or are eligible for Employment Insurance regular or sickness benefits or have exhausted their Employment Insurance, regular benefits or Employment Insurance fishing benefits between December 29, 2019 and October 3, 2020;
- Who had employment and/or self-employment income of at least \$5,000 in 2019 or in the 12 months prior to the date of their application; and,
- Who have not quit their job voluntarily

When first announced, CERB was not available to workers who continued to have any income, but this has since changed. To be eligible, the worker must earn less than a total of \$1,000 including employment and self-employment income over 14 or more consecutive days within the four-week benefit period of the claim. Ongoing eligibility requires that workers must not have earned more than a total of \$1,000 in employment and self-employment income for the entire four-week benefit period of a new claim.

When payments were sent in April, a number of recipients received double payments of CERB in error. In addition, many people misunderstood whether they qualified, the application process or accidentally applied for CERB twice. In either circumstance, or if it is determined that you no longer qualify, the government has requested that you make arrangements to repay the overpayment "as soon as feasible". Although the overpayment will not incur interest, or be imposed with a penalty, it is a debt owed to the Crown and should be repaid.

## Canada Emergency Response Benefit - Cont'd

Fay Moore, CLW, Kenora

You could become ineligible for the benefit, if during the 4-week period in question:

- you earned employment or self-employment income earlier than expected
- you applied for the CERB but later realize you're not eligible
- you receive a CERB payment from both Service Canada and the CRA for the same period

Although the government has not requested any documents verifying eligibility for CERB at this time, files may be reviewed once the pandemic conditions are eased. It is important to keep any documents relating to loss of earnings in case the government reviews your claim. At this time, the benefit will be payable for up to 16 weeks, or until October 3, 2020 (all applications must be made before December 2, 2020). If you have not returned to work when CERB ends (including maternity/parental leave), you may be able to apply for EI. If you started receiving EI benefits before March 15th, you will continue receiving EI benefits until the end of your claim.

Because CERB is a taxable benefit, and is not reduced by taxes when received, it's important to ensure that you are prepared for the 2020 tax season. Receiving the taxable benefit could result in owing more at tax-time.

Applications for CERB are completed online on Service Canada's website. If you do not have access to the internet, you can apply by calling 1-833-966-2099. If you have questions about CERB benefits, the Legal Clinic may be able to help.

## Your Health is Depending on You

Pam Robilliard, Support Staff, Kenora

Mental Health issues are more common than we think. Millions of people are affected by mental health issues every year, from depression to anxiety, and more. Knowing the warning signs can speed up recovery times. If you've noticed a change in your behaviour you may be suffering from a mental illness and it may be time to speak with someone about it.

According to NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) and Rethink.org, some of the common signs of mental illness can include the following:

- Prolonged or strong feelings of irritability or anger
- Excessive worrying or fear
- Having a low mood for a long time
- Extreme mood changes, including uncontrollable "highs" or feelings of euphoria
- Finding it difficult to concentrate or remember things
- Changes in sleeping habits or feeling tired and low energy
- Abuse of substances like alcohol or drugs
- Finding it difficult to manage everyday life, for example, preparing food and washing regularly
- Excessive spending and problems managing your money
- Becoming suspicious and paranoid
- Becoming isolated and withdrawn/avoiding friends and social activities
- Having suicidal thoughts
- Believing that your family and friends want to do you harm
- Believing that people or organizations are out to get you



***Sending a Big Thank You from the Northwest Community Legal Clinic Team to ALL Front Line Workers!***

While many of us are staying home as required, frontline workers are out there taking care of things, us, and our loved ones. We thank them for doing the work that we cannot do, and for their sacrifices.

# Your Health is Depending on You - Cont'd

Pam Robilliard, Support Staff, Kenora

- Experiencing hallucinations, difficulty perceiving reality; this means sensing things that other people do not, this can include seeing and hearing things
- Believing that you have special powers or are on a mission

During stressful times, it is important that we set realistic expectations for our ability to cope or we will eventually find ourselves overwhelmed and unable to manage our daily lives. If you are suffering, please don't do it alone; reach out to a loved one, a trusted professional such as your doctor or therapist, or share your feelings with a registered professional using one of the resources listed below. Remember, your mental health matters, and you are valued. Taking the first step may be scary but it is an important step to take. Your health is depending on you.

## **Anishinaabe Abinoojii Family Services**

Toll-Free: 1-866-420-9990 (24/7)

807-468-6224

[www.aafs.ca](http://www.aafs.ca)

## **Atikokan Community Counselling Services**

807-597-2724

[www.atikokaninfo.com](http://www.atikokaninfo.com)

## **Atikokan Native Friendship Centre**

807-597-1213

[www.atikokaninfo.com](http://www.atikokaninfo.com)

## **Atikokan Family Health Team**

807-597-8781

[www.atikokanfht.com](http://www.atikokanfht.com)

## **Better Help**

[www.betterhelp.com](http://www.betterhelp.com)

Online access to professional counsellors

## **Canadian Association of Mental Health**

Toll-Free: 1-800-463-2388 (24/7)

[www.camh.ca](http://www.camh.ca)

## **Canadian Mental Health Association & Crisis Services Canada**

Toll-Free: 1-833-456-4566 (24/7)

Text support: 45645 (4pm-12am ET daily)

[www.crisisservicescanada.ca](http://www.crisisservicescanada.ca)

[www.cmha.ca](http://www.cmha.ca)

## **Firefly**

Toll-Free: 1-800-465-7203

[www.fireflynw.ca](http://www.fireflynw.ca)

## **Kenora-Rainy River District Child and Family Services**

Toll Free: 1-800-465-1100

[www.krrcfs.ca](http://www.krrcfs.ca)

## **ConnexOntario**

Toll-Free: 1-866-531-2600 (24/7/365)

<https://www.connexontario.ca>

Provide free, confidential, and personalized responses to individuals about mental health, addiction, and problem gambling services throughout the province.

## **Northwestern Health Unit**

Toll-Free Hotline: 1-866-468-2240

[www.nwhu.on.ca](http://www.nwhu.on.ca)

## **United Native Friendship Centre**

Toll Free: Fort Frances 1-877-496-9034

[www.unfc.org](http://www.unfc.org)

## **Rainy River District Shelter of Hope (Atikokan Crisis Centre)**

Toll-Free: 1-800-465-3348

[www.atikokaninfo.com](http://www.atikokaninfo.com)

## **Weechi-it-te-win Family Services**

Toll Free: 1-800-465-2911 (24hr response)

[www.weechi.ca](http://www.weechi.ca)

## **Kids Help Phone**

Toll-Free: 1-800-668-6868 (24/7)

Also serving adults

Text "CONNECT" to 686868

Chat Services: <https://kidshelpphone.ca/live-chat/>

## **Riverside Community Counselling**

807-274-4807, Fort Frances ext. 1,

Emo ext. 2, Rainy River ext. 3

[www.riversidehealthcare.ca](http://www.riversidehealthcare.ca)

## **The LifeLine App**

[www.thelifelinecanada.ca](http://www.thelifelinecanada.ca)

Direct access to phone, online chat, text, and email crisis support

E-counselling, self-management tools, access to crisis centres across

Canada Available for iPhone and Android users

## **Crisis Response Services Kenora**

Toll-Free: 1-866-888-8988

Staffed by professionals 24/7

Crisis Response Services provides a range of programs to assist people 16 years and older with mental health and addictions concerns in the Kenora Rainy River District.

# Injured Workers' Day

Fay Moore, CLW, Kenora



**With our offices currently closed to the public due to Covid-19 please call us if you have any questions or require assistance.**

**Fort Frances  
807-274-5327  
1-800-799-2485**

**Atikokan  
807-597-2811**

**Kenora  
807-468-8888  
1-800-403-4757**

June 1<sup>st</sup> is Injured Workers' Day. During the COVID-19 pandemic it is especially important to recognize this day as a reminder that all workers who suffer workplace injuries or illness deserve to be treated fairly and provided justice.

In Ontario, most workplaces are governed by the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act (WSIA)* which covers compensation payments to injured workers, the *Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHS Act)* which sets out minimum standards for workplace safety, and the *Employment Standards Act (ESA)* which regulates the basics of employment such as minimum wage, vacation and sick time. It is important to ensure that the laws reflect the protection and support required for all workers, especially those continuing to work through the pandemic.

A few of the concerns arising during the pandemic are, how workers will be paid if they are sick, how much time will they be allowed to take away from work and how do they ensure their lives are balanced with work and vacation time.

To address the concern about whether essential workers who contract COVID-19 have access to Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) benefits, a private member's bill was recently introduced. If passed, Bill 191 would allow an essential worker to make a claim for WSIB benefits without having to prove that there is a direct link between their work and exposure to the virus. It is speculated that the bill will likely not pass, but it opens an opportunity for conversation about the need to support our essential workers. By doing this, the government may move to make changes to the *WSIA* that would provide some assurance to essential workers who contract COVID-19.

In 2017, the Employment Standards Act was updated to include some of the long required changes to provide employees with protections such as paid sick leave and the ability to take time off without providing a sick note from a doctor. This was soon taken away by the new government in 2018. The 15 & Fairness Campaign (formed by worker friendly groups, agencies and individuals) advocates for worker's rights and more employee supportive laws within the *ESA*. In light of the pandemic, and referring back to their previous requests for support for workers, they are asking the provincial government to implement:

- At least 7 paid emergency leave days per year plus an additional 14 during public health outbreaks
- Restore 10 job-protected emergency leave days for all
- Prohibit employers from asking for a doctor's note when worker access their emergency leave days
- 3 weeks of vacation for ALL workers

We can all do our part in ensuring that the government hears our concerns about the need to provide adequate support to our essential workers. The action can be as simple as sharing information, joining a virtual campaign, or speaking with our MPP about the concerns.

To take part in Injured Workers' Day, follow the links below.

Join the facebook event: <https://www.facebook.com/events/2784188051813262/>

Stream live on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A-7FTcNMjFU>

Register to participate and watch in your browser at: <https://www.crowdcast.io/e/june1st>

# Wishing Nan Normand A Wonderful Retirement!

Trudy McCormick, Executive Director



Nan Normand, Community Legal Worker, retired from her position with the Northwest Community Legal Clinic effective March 31, 2020. We want to celebrate her career, and wish her well in the next phase of her adventures.

Nan has had a lifelong commitment to social justice and inclusion for all. Nan volunteered as a board member with the Kenora Community Legal Clinic, acting as Board Chairperson for six years before applying for the position as Community Legal Worker at the Legal Clinic. Since joining the Clinic as a staff member in 1999, Nan has worked tirelessly to support the residents of Kenora on their journeys for safe and fulfilling lives.

As a staff member, Nan was devoted to her work, talking to people who came into the Clinic about their issues, representing them with fierce advocacy, and ensuring that our work was recorded and evaluated, so that it remained both meaningful and relevant.

Nan was not simply a 9 to 5, Monday to Friday staff member. She was everywhere in the community where she perceived a need. She has walked with her community to show solidarity, she has organized community picnics and events, she has spent many a Saturday cooking meals for those in need and breaking bread with those she feeds at a variety of community organizations and venues.

In telling a story, the person and their story live on. Nan has been instrumental in helping many community members tell their stories, and feel that they have been heard. It was important to her that Elder Nancy Morrison's story, *Approaching Dawn*, be published and shared. She also worked to share the annual Homeless in Kenora stories. She knows that we respect others through the sharing of their stories, and Nan is always ready to listen.

Nan has touched hundreds of lives in the 26 years that she has been involved in the work of the Legal Clinic, and in her work and volunteer commitments prior to that. We wish her joy and fulfillment in the next chapter of her story.





**Supporting individuals and our community  
by providing quality legal services.**

**Fort Frances**

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1-800-799-2485 Toll Free

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**[www.NorthwestCommunityLegalClinic.ca](http://www.NorthwestCommunityLegalClinic.ca)**

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out on  
Facebook!



## Office Closures

Wednesday July 1, 2020 - Canada Day  
Monday August 3, 2020 - Civic Holiday

## Sub-Offices

Please contact our Kenora Office at 807-468-8888 for details on the sub-offices in Red Lake and Ear Falls for the months of May, June and July.

## 211 North Launches a New Website

Rebekka DeCorte, Support Staff, Atikokan

Information on social, community, health and government services in Northern Ontario Dial 2-1-1 to speak with a Community Resource Specialist.

[www.211North.ca](http://www.211North.ca); Email: [questions@211north.ca](mailto:questions@211north.ca)

The website offers a wealth of information on the current Covid-19 situation and contains relevant updates for the public. An excerpt from the latest update is detailed below but be sure to visit the site or call 2-1-1 for more information:

### Novel Coronavirus Pandemic (COVID-19)

May 5, 2020

Information about COVID-19 and the current situation in Ontario is available on the Ministry of Health website. If you're experiencing symptoms of the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) contact: Telehealth Ontario at 1-866-797-0000 or Your Local Public Health Unit (list provided below). Health Canada's Information Line – 1-833-784-4397: telephone line is answered by a live agent who can provide information on COVID-19.

The update contains links for Covid-19 Symptoms & Treatment, How to Protect Yourself and Status of cases in Ontario, as well as Public Health Units in Northern Ontario and other relevant information.

**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.*



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