

**invisible
WOMEN
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CONCRETE
BARRIERS**

**Policy Roundtable on Issues Facing Refugee Women
Follow-up Report**

As a follow-up to our March 6, 2008 Policy Roundtable, please find enclosed additional information and actions taken on the eight key recommendations.

Invisible Women, Concrete Barriers Key Recommendations:

- Ensure that all babies born in Canada receive immediate **health coverage**.
 - All members of our planning committee sent a letter to the Minister of Health, the Minister of Immigration, and the Minister responsible for the NS Advisory Council on the Status of Women to explore this issue further.
 - Members of our planning committee met with a representative from Health Canada to discuss this further.

- **Educate Nova Scotia's health professionals** on the services guaranteed to refugee claimants by the Interim Federal Health Certificate.
 - We created an article explaining the coverage afforded to refugee claimants under the Interim Federal Health program and the process for health professionals to seek reimbursement for services. The article has been disseminated to:
 - Doctors NS
 - Lawton's Drug stores & Sobey's pharmacists
 - QEII Emergency Administration Management team
 - NS Nurses Union is awaiting a modified version to share

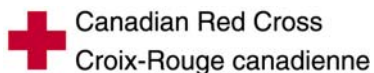
- Provide refugee claimants with information about and access to **affordable housing**.

- Provide free, province-wide **ESL classes** for refugee claimants.

- Create a provincially funded **support centre** to provide legal aid and informational resources for refugee claimants.
 - To date it appears that the Halifax Refugee Clinic and the Atlantic Refugee and Immigrant Services Society are the only

organizations/community groups offering legal aid and informational resources for refugee claimants.

- Work to build **programs and services** for refugee claimants through the Department of Community Service, and provide **funding for a refugee survival guide**.
 - Community Services is keen to allow our network to facilitate a workshop in the fall with regional directors to discuss the barriers identified by refugee women in NS.
- Ensure **access to culturally appropriate mental health services** for refugee claimants.
 - The Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia administers a Provincial Grants Program to support individuals and organizations to undertake programs or services that will benefit the mental health of individuals throughout Nova Scotia.¹
- Create a **partnership between Status of Women Canada and the Department of Immigration** to gather stakeholders to make policy changes that will help refugee women.
 - Our planning team has met with the NS Advisory Council on the Status of Women to invite them to become a planning partner on the project.



**Atlantic Refugee and
Immigrant Services Society
(ARISS)**

¹ Refer to the Mental Health Association of Nova Scotia for more information (www.mentalhealthns.ca).