

If You Lived at Southwestern Regional Centre or Are a Family Member of Someone Who Did, A Lawsuit May Affect Your Rights

(Toronto, Ontario) The following is being released by the law firm of Koskie Minsky LLP.

There is a class action lawsuit involving the Southwestern Regional Centre (“Southwestern”). Southwestern was a residential facility located in Blenheim, Ontario that provided care and treatment to persons labeled with a developmental disability from 1961 to 2008. Southwestern was operated by the Province of Ontario and was also known as “Cedar Springs”.

The lawsuit says the Province of Ontario failed to properly care for and protect people who lived at Southwestern. The lawsuit says residents of Southwestern were emotionally, physically, and psychologically traumatized by their experiences at the facility. The Province of Ontario denies these claims. The Court has not decided whether the Class or the Province of Ontario is right. The lawyers for the Class will have to prove their claims in Court.

The Court has appointed the following law firm from Ontario to represent the Class as “Class Counsel”: Koskie Minsky LLP. Class Counsel, Kirk Baert explains, “Madam Justice Horkins’ decision to certify this class action is a positive step towards achieving justice for the former residents and their family members,” said Baert. “The alleged physical and mental abuse that these former residents endured is very disturbing and we are hoping that this lawsuit will soon come to a conclusion, so that residents can finally see justice and compensation in their lifetime.”

The lawsuit affects people who were: Southwestern residents any time between 1963 and 2008; family members of a Southwestern resident between 1978 and 2008; or estate trustees for a Southwestern resident between 1963 and 2008 who died after December 29, 2008. There is no money available now and no guarantee that there will be.

Class Members do not have to pay Class Counsel, or anyone else, in order to participate. If any money or benefit is obtained, Class Counsel will request fees and costs from the Court, which would be deducted from any money obtained, or paid separately by the Province of Ontario. Class Members may hire their own lawyer to appear in Court, with leave of the court, on their behalf at their own expense.

Class Members do not need to do anything to stay in the Class. They will be legally bound by all orders and judgments of the Court, and cannot sue the Province of Ontario about the legal claims in this case. If money or benefits are obtained, they will be notified about how to ask for a share. **Staying in the Class will not impact the residence or services and supports received by Class Members from community based agencies funded by the Province of Ontario.**

Class Members who want to keep the right to sue the Province of Ontario over the claims in this case need to opt out or remove themselves from the Class. They will not get any money or benefits if any are awarded. All requests to be removed must be made in writing postmarked no later than **June 19, 2012**. Details on how to be removed can be found at www.southwesternclassaction.ca.

Some Class Members may have difficulty reading, so we are asking for the help from family members, caregivers and friends of former residents in getting information to them. Please show this notice to people who are impacted by this lawsuit or to their caregivers.

More detailed information on this lawsuit is available on the website at www.southwesternclassaction.ca. You may also call toll-free 1-877-797-6678 (TTY: 1-877-627-7027); write to: Southwestern Class Action Administrator, 3-505, 133 Weber Street North, Waterloo, Ontario, N2J 3G9; or email: southwestern@crawco.ca.

Class Members who are having a difficult time dealing with the issues in this lawsuit can call 1-877-797-6678 (TTY: 1-877-627-7027) for assistance.