

If You Lived at Southwestern Regional Centre or Are a Family Member of Someone Who Did

A Lawsuit May Affect Your Rights. Please Read this Notice Carefully

You could be affected by a class action lawsuit involving Southwestern Regional Centre (“Southwestern”). Southwestern was a residential facility located in Blenheim, Ontario that provided care and treatment to persons with a developmental disability from 1961 to 2008. The Province of Ontario operated Southwestern.

The Ontario Superior Court of Justice decided that this should be a class action on behalf of a “Class,” or group of people, that could include you. This notice summarizes your rights and options. You have a choice of whether to stay in the Class or not, and you must decide this now. There is no money available now and no guarantee that there will be.

What is this case about?

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 Southwestern. 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.

If you are having a difficult time dealing with these issues you can call 1-877-797-6678 (TTY: 1-877-627-7027) for assistance.

Are you included?

You are included in this lawsuit if:

- You lived at Southwestern at any time between September 1, 1963 and October 31, 2008, **or**
- You are a parent, spouse, child or sibling of someone who lived at Southwestern between March 31, 1978 and October 31, 2008; **or**
- You are an estate trustee of someone who lived at Southwestern between September 1, 1963 and October 31, 2008 who died after December 29, 2008.

Southwestern has been known by various names, including the Ontario Hospital School for Retarded Children at Cedar Springs and Southwestern Regional Centre.

Who represents the class?

The Court has appointed the following law firm from Ontario to represent the Class as “Class Counsel”: Koskie Minsky LLP.

You don’t have to pay Class Counsel or anyone else, to participate. Instead, if they get money or benefits for the Class, they may ask for lawyers’ fees and costs, which would be deducted from any money obtained, or paid separately by the Province of Ontario, and approved by the Court. You may hire your own lawyer to appear in Court for you, with leave of the court, but if you do, you have to pay that lawyer.

What are your options?

Stay in the Class: To stay in the Class, you do not have to do anything. If money or benefits are obtained, you will be notified about how to ask for a share. You will be legally bound by all orders and judgments of the Court, and you will not be able to sue the Province of Ontario about the legal claims in this case.

Staying in this Class will not impact the residence or services and supports received by class members from community based agencies which are funded by the Province of Ontario.

Get out of the Class: If you want to keep your rights to sue the Province of Ontario over the claims in this case you need to opt out or remove yourself. If you remove yourself, you cannot get money or benefits from this lawsuit if any are awarded. To ask to be removed, send a letter to the address below, postmarked no later than **June 19, 2012**, that says you want to be removed from *Bechard v. Province of Ontario*. Include your name, address, telephone number, and signature.

How can I get more information?

Go to www.southwesternclassaction.ca, call toll-free 1-877-797-6678 (TTY: 1-877-627-7027) or write to Southwestern Class Action Administrator, 3-505, 133 Weber Street North, Waterloo, Ontario, N2J 3G9, or by email at: southwestern@crowco.ca.

Getting information to people who cannot read.

We ask for the help of family members, caregivers and friends of former residents in getting information to former residents who have trouble reading. More information about this lawsuit is available at the website or by calling the toll-free number. Please show this notice to people who are impacted by this lawsuit or their caregivers.

**For More Information: www.southwesternclassaction.ca
1-877-797-6678 (TTY: 1-877-627-7027)**