

THE MANITOBA
HUMAN RIGHTS
COMMISSION



LA COMMISSION DES
DROITS DE LA PERSONNE
DU MANITOBA

News Release: The Manitoba Human Rights Commission

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Complaints based on physical and mental disability continue to increase

2003 Annual Report Released

As revealed in the 2003 Manitoba Human Rights Commission's Annual Report, complaints based on physical and mental disability continue to increase.

According to Dianna Scarth, the Executive Director of the Manitoba Human Rights Commission, this trend has been steady and incremental over the past ten years. "In 1993 the percentage of complaints filed under disability was about 19%. The percentage continued to increase over the years and, in 2003, the figure reached over 40%", she says.

Ms Scarth adds that the majority of complaints based on disability raise allegations that employers or service providers have failed to offer reasonable accommodation of special needs. This topic has been addressed in the past few years in the Meiorin and Grismer decisions of the Supreme Court of Canada. Ms Scarth says that there is some confusion over the concept of reasonable accommodation and, to assist employers and service providers deal with the implications of these recent decisions, the Commission offers seminars and workshops on the topic.

Proposed amendments to the *Human Rights Code* are also outlined in the 2003 annual report. Chairperson Janet Baldwin says that one of the amendments is to add "social condition" as a protection under *The Code*. "This amendment would allow the Commission to respond more comprehensively to discrimination based on social and economic disadvantage," she explains. Another proposed amendment is the clarification of gender identity.

The full report is available on the Commission's website at www.gov.mb.ca/hrc

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