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Status For All!

Cross-Country Actions Demand Permanent Resident Status for All Migrants



Health Care For All!

- **Migrante Alberta Public Forum**
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Status For All!

Cross-Country Actions Demand Permanent Resident Status for All Migrants

The Migrant Rights Network (MRN) is organizing coast to coast actions from December 3 to 5 under the theme "Tell Your Member of Parliament: We Live Here! The Crisis is Now!" calling on

Members of Parliament (MPs) to support the demand for full and permanent immigration status for all. Groups across the country are requesting meetings with MPs on December 3 and organizing public actions at offices of MPs on December 4 and 5.



In a letter to the new Trudeau cabinet dated October 29, the MRN states:

"We call on you to immediately ensure Permanent Resident status for every resident in the country today, and to ensure that all future migrants arrive with Permanent Resident status. Canada has shifted to a system of permanent temporariness: there were at least 1,146,008 migrants on temporary permits on December 30, 2020, and at least an additional 500,000 undocumented people, as compared to only 184,000 new permanent residents in the same year. Over 1.6 million migrants in the country -- one in 23 residents -- face exclusions and exploitation every day. In order to build a fair society and ensure a genuine recovery from the pandemic, migrants must have permanent residency so that they have the same rights and protections as other residents."

The letter calls for the government to enact extensive policy and legislative changes to ensure that all migrants get permanent resident status or citizenship and to protect and defend the rights of migrants by ending all arbitrary and unjust detentions of migrant workers who have lost their status through no fault of their own; lifting restrictive and arbitrary policies and practices of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada which makes it nearly impossible for migrant workers and their families, undocumented people, international students and others to gain permanent status; provision of basic health care and other supports including vaccinations and financial aid during the pandemic; and an end to the system of modern day human trafficking and slavery which makes people vulnerable to exploitation and abuse.

It is noteworthy that the Throne Speech on November 22 states, under the theme: "This is the moment to stand up for diversity and inclusion," -- "Canadians understand that equity, justice, and diversity are the means and the ends to living together. Fighting systemic racism, sexism, discrimination, misconduct, and abuse, including in our core institutions, will remain a key priority."

It is the state, not the workers of Canada and Quebec, that creates categories of people and discriminates on the basis of race, ethnicity, immigration status, etc. It is the Canadian state through all levels of government and policing systems that is the source of "systemic racism, sexism, discrimination, misconduct and abuse" as evidenced by the treatment of migrant workers and those

without status in Canada. MRN notes: "Prime Minister Trudeau already started this mandate by acting against migrants. He allowed the Temporary Resident to Permanent Resident program's health care stream [1] to expire even though 13,000 of the 20,000 spots were unfilled. Over 10,000 of us signed a petition calling on the government to allow refugees and undocumented people to apply."

Workers Forum calls on everyone to join the actions organized by the Migrant Rights Network on December 3-5 in the spirit of taking a bold stand together in defence of the rights of all and to demand an end to criminalization of migrant workers and their families and undocumented workers who have rights by dint of being human, rights which Canada must respect and uphold. For information on actions in your community, [click here](#).

Note

1. From May 6 to November 5 Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada accepted applications for Permanent Resident Status from up to 20,000 temporary workers in health care.

(Photo: Migrant Rights Network)

Health Care For All!

Migrante Alberta Public Forum

Connect-ED Education Series

**HEALTHCARE FOR ALL
MIGRANTS' JUSTICE FORUM**

15 NOVEMBER @ 6PM MST

While we are still in the midst of the 4th wave of this global pandemic, many residents who do not have immigration status still cannot access healthcare. They are our neighbours and friends who are part of the essential workforce.

MIGRANTS' RIGHTS ARE HUMAN RIGHTS!

FOLLOW THE LINK TO JOIN US
tiny.cc/Healthcare4All_Forum
migrantealberta@gmail.com

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

MIGRANTE ALBERTA

“

They said health is wealth. How can you say health is wealth if there are only few people that can access it. It should be for everybody, it should be for all. With ongoing pandemic, how can we protect each one of us if there are people left behind.

Danilo, Non-status migrant

Listen to the Healthcare For All Podcast at:
http://tiny.cc/HealthCare4All_Podcast01

#ahs4all

A Project of:
Migrante Alberta and Refugee Health Coalition

Migrante Alberta held a Migrants' Justice Forum -- Healthcare for All! on November 15 as part of their active campaign for the right of all to health care. Migrante Alberta pointed out, "While we are still in the midst of the 4th wave of this global pandemic, many residents who do not have immigration status still cannot access health care. They are our neighbours and friends who are part of the essential workforce." The campaign affirms that health care is a right which belongs to everyone.

Healthcare for All! is calling for:

- barrier free access to vaccination, proof of vaccination and treatment for COVID-19;
- expansion of barrier-free access including for pregnancy and tertiary care;
- universal coverage regardless of status, with no waiting periods;

- support for community-based migrant-responsive health care; and
- permanent residency upon arrival.

Even the provision of health care for COVID-19 testing, vaccination, and treatment in Alberta is inconsistent, irrational, and inhumane, while undocumented workers cannot access public health care for non-COVID health issues. Until recently a valid health care card was required in order to book a COVID-19 vaccination. In response, Migrante and other organizations worked with physicians to operate safe clinics for migrant workers to get vaccinated. While anyone can now access vaccination at an Alberta Health Services (AHS) site, this is not well known and messaging continues to state that people need to bring their health care card. Pharmacies will not provide vaccination to people without a valid health care card, even though this is the only place to access vaccine in many rural communities. People without a valid health care card cannot get a COVID-19 test from an AHS site and must get tested privately and pay the costs themselves. Even when undocumented workers are able to get vaccinated, they cannot obtain the QR code needed to access non-essential businesses and other venues.

Sandra Azocar of Friends of Medicare explained that the Kenney government created an even more precarious situation by removing provisions which allowed physicians to make good faith claims for patients who could not provide ID or a valid health care card. As of March 31, 2020, Alberta Health no longer makes any payment for services rendered in a doctor's office or hospital without a valid Alberta health insurance card.

In the midst of a pandemic, the Canada Border Services Agency has resumed deportation of undocumented workers. The concern that information may be shared with the Canadian Border Services Agency is another barrier to accessing health care. There are also reports that many migrant workers in rural areas have not been informed that they can get vaccinated.

In Alberta, migrant workers who have fallen out of status during the pandemic are only eligible for an extension of their health care for six months, despite Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada acknowledging significant processing delays. Anyone whose application to stay in Canada has been rejected is ineligible.



Governments which bring into being and perpetuate such brutal systems and show such indifference to the very lives of people on the basis of their immigration status are unfit to rule.

Rights must be affirmed and guaranteed wherever people are, not just where they were born. Migrant workers who have lost their status must be immediately given full access to health care, as well as immediate regularization. To date, not a single one of the parties in the parliament have responded to the needs of migrant workers or supported regularization and status for all.

Undocumented workers have real and legitimate claims on society as human beings, and because of their contribution to the society. They are "essential workers" as we have seen in Canada during the pandemic. They are speaking out in their own name and smashing the silence, laying claim to what belongs to them by virtue of being human. They are contributing to the fight for the rights of all and to bring into being societies which uphold the rights of all.

(Photos: WF, Migrante Alberta)

Undocumented Workers Speak Out

Migrant rights organizations estimate that there may be as many as 500,000 to 800,000 undocumented workers living in Canada. In 2008, there were 58,000 temporary foreign workers living and working in Alberta. In 2019, there were only 10,000, but this number does not count the many thousands of workers who have fallen out of status and become undocumented. With 475 occupations now deemed ineligible by the Kenney government, this number is expected to grow as work permits expire.

Some workers have fallen out of status because of delays in processing applications during the pandemic. Many were victims of Jason Kenney's 4 and 4 program when he was Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. Under the new rules Kenney brought in, after working in Canada for four years, migrants had to leave Canada for four years before making a new application. Although the Trudeau Liberals cancelled this directive, nothing was done for those who lost their status and who have no path to permanent residency from within Canada. Other reasons for falling out of status include work permits not being renewed, or workers fired for defending their rights and standing up to abuse. Many undocumented workers acquired debts to human traffickers, and/or paid exorbitant fees to "immigration consultants," or to schools, some of which fraudulently claimed that they would be eligible on graduation for a post-graduation work permit. Health care for all and regularization of undocumented workers is a debt owed by Canada, which engages in human trafficking of migrant workers.

Undocumented workers are courageously speaking up and they deserve the full support of all Canadians in their fight for *Health Care For All!* and for regularization and *Status for All!*



At a recent forum organized by Women for Rights and Empowerment, a worker explained that he came to Canada on a work permit, working for a company that abused his rights as a worker and those of all the temporary foreign workers the cleaning company hired. Together with other workers he played a leading role in the successful campaign to organize a union. But he lost his status in 2017, and remains undocumented. Despite his undocumented status, he continues to speak out, advocate and organize migrant workers to defend their rights and the rights of all.

An undocumented worker spoke out about his experience at Migrant's Healthcare for All! forum. He explained that he came to Canada in 2014 as a skilled industrial technician. After leaving the Philippines and working in Hong Kong for 12 years, he paid a broker US\$3500 just to get an interview for a job in Canada. He was successful and came to Canada on a two-year contract, with assurances that he was now on the path to permanent residency. Instead, with the downturn in oil and gas, none of the temporary foreign workers hired by his employer had their contacts renewed, and in 2017 he lost his status. An immigration consultant promised to help and scammed him for \$5,000, all of his savings, with no results to show for it. Now both the worker and his partner are undocumented, with two Canadian born children who are citizens. He

explained that the pandemic has made life even more difficult for undocumented workers, with many workers losing their jobs and their access to health care, more vulnerable than ever to super-exploitation by employers.

Migrant workers contribute immensely to Canadian society, yet they and their families face blatant discrimination and are treated as disposable by the Canadian state. They struggle to survive, living with the stress and anxiety that they will be given a removal order or be detained and sent to remand. This state-organized discrimination and violation of their rights has to end. No more empty promises and platitudes! Status for refugees, students, workers and undocumented people -- *Status for All!* - is a legitimate demand to humanize our society.

The Fight for Health Care for Canadian-born Children of Undocumented Workers

Many undocumented workers have children born in Canada who are Canadian citizens. Migrant Alberta waged a successful campaign for health care for the Canadian-born children of undocumented workers. Now it appears that the Alberta government has concocted some undisclosed criteria to deprive even these children of health care.

The AHS website states that, "If a child is a Canadian citizen and the parent is physically present in Alberta and intends to remain in Alberta, the child might be eligible for AHCIP coverage, regardless of their parent's eligibility."

On what grounds is the Alberta government saying that a Canadian citizen living in Alberta "might" be eligible for health care coverage? It does not say. This compounds the difficult decisions of undocumented workers facing deportation. CBS agents have cruelly told undocumented women workers in Alberta that while they face deportation, their children do not. They are given the "option" of voluntary removal, which holds out a possibility of returning to Canada in the future, or facing deportation with basically no chance of ever returning. Now it seems that if the children remain in Canada for their education, staying with extended family or other caregivers, they can be deprived of health care. This is a sign of a government out of control, for whom migrant workers and their families are not human beings, but things to be used and discarded, and legal entitlements something to be violated with impunity. This must end! Immediate regularization and Status for All!

(Photos: WF, Migrant Alberta)



Manitoba Coalition Calls for Access to Health Care for All Residents

In Manitoba, a coalition of fifteen organizations is demanding Healthcare For All! The coalition is calling on the government to legislate comprehensive and free healthcare coverage to all residents of Manitoba regardless of immigration status, including refugee claimants, migrant workers,

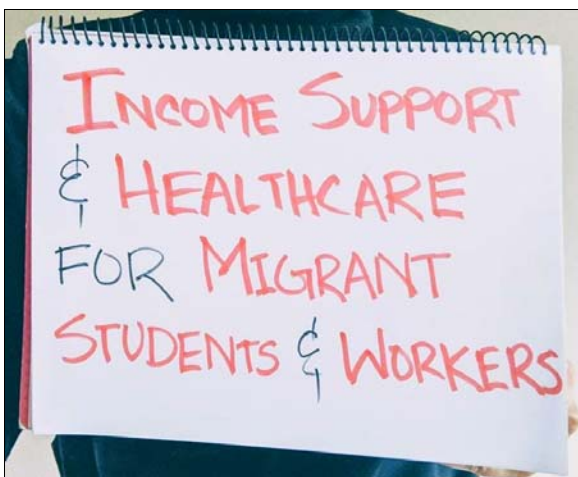
international students, dependent children of temporary residents, and undocumented residents.

There are many people who have no health insurance, or costly private insurance which provides only partial coverage. International students were covered by the public health care plan until 2018 when the government removed coverage, a move it said would "save" \$3 million. International students are considered "cash cows" and pay exorbitant tuition fees, which in Manitoba are on average more than three times the tuition paid by Canadian citizens and permanent residents. "The government should stop treating humans as numbers for economic purposes, but see value in us and extend health coverage to us," Judith Oviosun, the provincial campaigns co-ordinator for the Manitoba chapter of the Canadian Federation of Students, said at a news conference on November 25.



International students and migrant workers without a Manitoba health care card also face another problem, that because they don't have a health care card, they cannot get a proof of vaccine card required by employers, and to access businesses and many facilities.

Migrant workers with a work permit for less than a year are denied public health care, and must find their own coverage. Workers who have fallen out of status are not eligible for health care. Private health care coverage is usually limited to emergency procedures, says Diwa Marcelino, an organizer with Migrate Manitoba.



Because health care coverage is tied to their work permit with one employer, this makes migrant workers more vulnerable in the face of harassment, bad working conditions and discrimination, Marcelino said. "Migrant workers need health care as a right. They don't need health care to be put over their head like a dangling carrot for them to shut up and be quiet and continue to be exploited by their employers," he said.

Healthcare for All has started a petition on the Canadian Federation of Students website, which had nearly 500 signatures as of November 24.

The opposition NDP has committed to repeatedly reading the petition in the Manitoba Legislature in an effort to push the government to turn back the clock.

The petition calls on the government of Manitoba:

- To immediately provide comprehensive and free healthcare coverage to all residents of Manitoba regardless of immigration status, including refugee claimants, migrant workers, international students, dependent children of temporary residents, and undocumented residents. This must be permanently enshrined in legislation.
- To urge the Minister of Health to undertake a multilingual communication campaign to provide

information on expanded coverage to all affected residents.

- To urge the Minister of Health to inform all healthcare institutions and providers of expanded coverage for those without health insurance and the details on how necessary policy and protocol changes will be implemented.

- To urge the Minister of Health to create and enforce strict confidentiality policies and provide staff with training to protect the safety of residents with precarious immigration status and ensure they can access health care without jeopardizing their ability to remain in Canada.

To sign the petition, [click here](#).

The image displays four red panels arranged in a 2x2 grid. Each panel has a black header with the text 'HEALTHCARE FOR ALL MANITOBA' and a white heart icon. Below the header, each panel contains a numbered demand (1, 2, 3, and 4) in a white circle. The text of the demands is white on the red background.

HEALTHCARE FOR ALL MANITOBA

OUR DEMANDS

1

Immediately provide comprehensive and free healthcare coverage - including vaccination - to all residents of Manitoba regardless of immigration status including refugee claimants, migrant workers, international students, dependent children of temporary residents, and undocumented residents. This must be permanently enshrined in legislation.

HEALTHCARE FOR ALL MANITOBA

OUR DEMANDS

2

Inform all healthcare institutions and providers of expanded coverage for those without health insurance, the policy details and how they will be implemented, as well as the necessary protocols on coverage changes, the application of billing codes, and the cessation of registration or billing fees.

HEALTHCARE FOR ALL MANITOBA

OUR DEMANDS

3

Develop and implement a multilingual communication campaign in partnership with organizations serving migrants and newcomers to inform all those currently without provincial health care coverage about the availability of COVID testing, treatment, and vaccination without a health card.

HEALTHCARE FOR ALL MANITOBA

OUR DEMANDS

4

Create and enforce strict confidentiality policies and provide staff with training to protect the safety of residents with precarious immigration status and ensure they can access health care without jeopardizing their ability to remain in Canada. Access Without Fear policies prevent sharing personal health information or immigration status with immigration authorities.

(With files from CBC. Photos: MWA, Healthcare for All MB)

(To access articles individually click on the black headline.)

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