

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Advisory

CCNC Toronto Chapter expresses condolences to the Family of Jiang Guo Bing and calls for Government Support for Immigrant Mental Health Issues

TORONTO – (July 26, 2006) The Chinese community in Toronto was shaken by this weekend’s tragic suicide of a professional immigrant from China. Dr. Jiang Guo Bing, immigrated to Canada in 2001. “We wish to express our condolences to the family of Dr. Jiang.” said Esther Yip, Co-President of CCNC Toronto Chapter.

At CCNC Toronto, we are committed to promote economic and social rights of immigrants of Chinese origins. “This incident reminds us of the economic and emotional hardships facing Chinese immigrants”, said Karen Sun, Executive Director. A recent study conducted by Professor Izumi Sakamoto from University of Toronto looked at the issue of processes and strategies of Mainland Chinese skilled immigrants to adapt to the Canadian context. CCNC Toronto Chapter is the community partner of this project titled “*Negotiating Canadianness, Navigating Cultural Currents: Chinese Skilled Immigrants in Toronto*”.

The key findings of this study showed that **employment, language, mental health issues and developing coping strategies** all played a part in the ability of Mainland Chinese skilled immigrants in adapting to life in Canada. Although immigrants who have been in Canada longer tend to have more job stability, they continue to face underemployment, limited career development opportunities and discrimination and exclusion in the workplace which hinders them from obtaining high job satisfaction.

Stressed by unemployment or underemployment and having experienced disillusionment about leading a “better life” in Canada, participants in the study felt that depression, family conflict, and extreme cases, such as suicide, occurred more often to immigrants who have been here longer (4-10 years) than to newcomers (less than 3 years). “Loss of self”, “no face”, “no future”, and “waste of life” are the words used by the study participants to describe their life after immigration indicate tremendous psychological stresses. Trapped in labour jobs, some interviewees felt embarrassed when comparing themselves with their peers of their home country. The participants all described a loss in their social status and deskilling in employment after immigration.

Among the recommendations of this study include:

- The need to expand the eligibility and tailored services for immigrants who have been in Canada longer than 3 years, so that they are not excluded from the settlement and employment services that they need.
- Improved access to healthcare and social services in the initial settlement process and these services need to be tailored and targeted to immigrants starting from the time of their arrival.

- The diversity within an ethno-cultural group, as well as the intersection of identities, needs to be reflected in social policies for skilled immigrants.
- The different groups of people within the “Chinese” community in Toronto should create a dialogue and foster understand among the different segments of the community.
- Funding requirements for social service agencies needs to be more flexible so that they are better able to respond to tailoring their programs to the specific needs of a community.

Greater awareness and support for immigrant mental health issues will improve the quality of life and their transition process of life in Canada.

CCNC Toronto Chapter is a 26-year old organization of Chinese Canadians in the City of Toronto that promotes equity, social justice, inclusive civic participation, and respect for diversity.

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