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Immigration referrals

LSS recently received confirmation of its budget for next fiscal year, and we are pleased to advise that our budget includes funding for immigration services. Referrals with a service stop date of March 31, 2006 will be amended to March 31, 2007. For further information, please see Notice to Counsel #49 on our website at www.lss.bc.ca.

Vendor updates

Please send all vendor updates to the Finance department by e-mail helpdesk.finance@lss.bc.ca or telephone (604) 601-6111.

Billing tip — tiered rates

To avoid account processing delays, please use the published tariff rates (tier 1 rates) when preparing your accounts. When processing your accounts, LSS will automatically calculate and apply the applicable tiered rate increase, if any, to the amount approved. The adjustment amount LSS calculates will be printed on your cheque remittance. For your own accounting purposes, you may wish to calculate any applicable increases in the adjusted account total in the "Lawyer use only" box on your billing form, so that your LSS cheque amounts match the amounts claimed in your submitted accounts.

CFCSA administration fee — tariff code

The administration fee tariff code in the online version of the CFCSA tariff was incorrect. It has now been corrected to show the correct code: 5001. You may wish to reprint and replace the applicable page of the *Guide to Legal Aid Tariffs*.

Tiered rates and mentoring pilot projects

Expanded information on tiered rates and mentoring pilot projects is now posted on the LSS website at www.lss.bc.ca (For lawyers — Online resources, then scroll down to LSS programs and policies).

Sex offender registry referrals

LSS makes referrals for sexual offender information registration applications (SOIRA) only in exceptional circumstances or on an existing referral as part of the sentencing proceedings. You may apply for a SOIRA referral to the Manager, Criminal Law and Large Case Management, after your client has applied for legal aid.

CLE course discounts and bursary

There are just a few bursaries remaining for the Controlled Drugs 2006 course. (See the February LAF for details on who can apply.) To apply for a bursary, send an e-mail to lawyersresources@lss.bc.ca. CLE programs (see www.cle.bc.ca for details) are available at a discount for lawyers who agree to accept 12 or more LSS referrals in a year.

Transcript changes

The BC Supreme Court has implemented new procedures for ordering transcripts of oral reasons for judgment/sentence. In addition to the standard Transcript Order Form, you must now complete and submit electronically to the transcription firm a "Finalization and Distribution of Oral Transcription Request Form." For more information, see www.ag.gov.bc.ca/courts/transcription/index.htm.

Lawyer stats

Thanks to the hard work of private bar lawyers and your staff around the province, we can advise that in 2005, you represented or gave advice to approximately:

- 24,000 clients who were issued referrals
- 61,000 people seen by Criminal/Circuit Duty Counsel
- 987 people seen by Immigration Duty Counsel
- 16,600 people seen by Family Duty Counsel

Extended family program

When it was introduced last year, the Family Tariff (Extended Services) offered up to 40 hours of preparation and attendance time to allow counsel to see a client's matter through to a trial's conclusion. This allocation has generally worked well for counsel and clients, but in some cases, circumstances may prevent you from completing the case within the 40 hours. If this occurs, you may send in a second opinion letter to ask for more hours. Clearly explain why the matter could not be completed within the initial extended services referral and outline the steps to be taken to ensure the matter concludes with a second authorization. LSS expects you to have used the time previously authorized (e.g., completed discoveries, if authorized, and made significant progress towards concluding the case) before it will authorize additional time.