



Legal Advice & Representation Division

New manager, criminal law

Effective April 16, 2007, David Griffiths will be the new manager of Criminal Law in the Legal Advice and Representation Division.

David brings a wealth of criminal law experience to the position. His years in private practice were primarily in criminal law, largely in the Lower Mainland. David has appeared on cases at all levels of court, including the Supreme Court of Canada. He joined LSS in 1999 as the managing lawyer of the Gastown Criminal Law Clinic. In 2001, he became the director of the Vancouver regional office. In 2002, he became the manager of Field Operations and was the criminal law advisor for LSS. Since June 2005, David has been the manager of Civil Law, where he has overseen significant tariff changes, particularly in family law.

New manager, civil law

Effective April 16, 2007, Kyong-ae Kim will be the new manager of Civil Law in the Legal Advice and Representation Division.

Kyong-ae comes to LSS with considerable civil law and administrative experience. Her 18 years in practice include working as a labour lawyer for the Health Employers Association of BC, and working in the Professional Conduct group at the Law Society and with a prominent Vancouver civil litigation firm. Kyong-ae brings a strong commitment to social justice issues as reflected in a range of volunteer activities including the early development of the Westcoast Domestic Workers Association.

LSS to survey clients

In April 2007, LSS will survey approximately 2,000 representation, advice, information, and intake clients across the province about their perceptions of the accessibility, effectiveness, and quality of the society's services. This information will be used to improve legal aid services.

Duty counsel and LSS intake and LawLINE staff began asking clients for their consent to participate in the survey in mid-February. A list of representation clients whose cases are wholly or substantially completed will be created using our database. Participation by clients is voluntary and they can decline to be interviewed when they are contacted. LSS will screen the client list before it is sent to Synovate, the research firm LSS has contracted to conduct the survey. Synovate will be given only the client's name, contact information, case type, and demographics, such as language spoken.

Clients will not be surveyed about the details of their cases.

For more information about the client survey, contact Kathryn Spracklin at kathryn.spracklin@lss.bc.ca or at (604) 601-6127.

Tariff lawyer survey responses in

LSS would like to thank everyone who participated in the society's 2007 tariff lawyer satisfaction survey last month. We received 379 responses (39.4%).

We appreciate the time you took to complete the survey. Your input will help us identify where we can continue to make improvements. We are analyzing the responses and will post the results on the LSS website in July.

Family mediation

LSS continues to be encouraged by the number of referrals issued under our family services initiatives. All family referrals now include specific tariff items to encourage mediation and collaborative practice. Historically, LSS has been billed for mediation in only 2½ cases per month. Since November 2006, this rate has increased to over 8 cases per month. In February, we were billed for 12 mediations in family cases. This trend is an important part of our effort to help our clients resolve their family law disputes.

LSS is working with the Mediation Roster Society to compile lists of qualified mediators who are willing to work at the legal aid rate of \$83.90 per hour. Under our tariff we assume that the costs of mediation will be split between the parties so that each legally aided client's share is \$41.95 per hour for up to 4 hours of preparation and up to 8 hours of attendance at mediation. If authorization beyond these limits is required, please contact the LSS disbursements coordinator.

Authorization can also be obtained when the opposing party is not able to share the cost of mediation. We will require you to describe what efforts have been made to get the opposing party to make a reasonable contribution towards the cost of mediation.

Extended family services

In November, LSS introduced a new Opinion Letter to request Extended Family Services. The new form focuses on efforts to resolve family issues through negotiation or other consensual processes. Please note that when Extended Family Services are authorized, it closes the original Emergency or Dispute Resolution referral. This ensures that LSS does not have two open referrals covering the same services. Please bill out your original referral promptly to avoid any confusion over where to allocate your services.