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## Holdback payment

Tariff expenditures in all areas of law were under budget this year, largely due to lower than expected case volumes. As a result, the LSS Board of Directors has approved paying 100% of the holdbacks that were withheld from all paid 2004/2005 accounts. Holdback payment cheques, totalling approximately \$3.5 million, will be issued to all lawyers in late June. This is the first time since holdbacks were implemented in 1994 that the society has been able to make a 100% payment.

## CFCSA conference follow-up

More than 200 parents' counsel, Directors' counsel, MCFD staff, and mediators attended a conference on new directions in child protection law in Vancouver on March 14 and 15. LSS paid parents' counsel costs using monies received from the Law Foundation of BC for Quality Assurance.

As a follow-up to the conference, the Tariff Services Department plans to create a committee to help LSS revise the CFCSA tariff, particularly around mediation initiatives. If you are interested in participating in the CFCSA Tariff Advisory Committee, contact the Manager, Tariff Services by fax at (604) 681-7963.

If you would like to have a case proceed through mediation but are meeting resistance in your region, please let us know. Contact Rochelle Appleby in Tariff Services at (604) 601-6055.

LSS hopes to sponsor future continuing legal education programs for specific areas of law to support the private bar in providing high quality tariff services.

## Provincial sales tax on legal fees

Further to the recent court decision that exempts low income clients from the PST on legal fees, please see the Consumer Taxation Branch website at [www.rev.gov.bc.ca/ctb/LegalServices.htm](http://www.rev.gov.bc.ca/ctb/LegalServices.htm) for general information and guidelines and [www.rev.gov.bc.ca/ctb/LegalServices\\_FAQ.htm](http://www.rev.gov.bc.ca/ctb/LegalServices_FAQ.htm) for questions and answers.

## E-billing system outage

Night owls please note that the E-billing system will be down every Friday from 3:00 a.m. to 3:30 a.m. for system maintenance.

## Vancouver accommodation for lawyers

LSS is assembling a list of hotels that are within walking distance of courthouses and offer government rates to lawyers travelling on legal aid cases. We have confirmed that the following Vancouver hotels offer these rates:

- Sutton Place Hotel
- Metropolitan Hotel (the government rate is limited based on their occupancy rate)
- Crown Plaza Georgia (available only during the off-season)

Please contact the disbursements co-ordinator at [helpdesk.disbursements@lss.bc.ca](mailto:helpdesk.disbursements@lss.bc.ca), by fax at (604) 681-7963, or by phone at (604) 601-6145 if you —

- have a lengthy trial in Vancouver (to discuss whether you are eligible for the Sutton Place Hotel's long-term stay rate, which requires more than five nights' accommodation);
- are unable to obtain a government rate at any of these hotels;
- need a hotel in a different location that accepts government rates, or
- require written authorization that you are acting for a legal aid client to obtain the government rate.

## Billing tips

- Please respond to billing reports on the report form that is faxed to you. Do not submit a "replacement" account to rectify the problem.
- Time spent preparing Extended Family Opinion Letters is billable as general preparation under the Family Tariff (Emergency Services). Opinion letters for extended services should be faxed to the Manager, Tariff Services at (604) 681-7963.
- To bill extended services, check off approved services on the family billing form.