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Local agents appointed

LSS is pleased to announce the successful candidates for the new local agent contracts across the province.

Kamloops: Louise Richards

Kelowna: Andrew Vandersluys

Prince George: Beatrix Josephy

Surrey, New Westminster, Langley: Craig Sicotte

Victoria: Roland Kuczma

The seven new locations will open **March 29, 2010** and will replace five regional centres (closing **March 26, 2010**). Our new local agents will maintain the same phone numbers as the regional centres in their communities. The local agents will have access to client and file information on current and pending cases. We plan to make this transition as seamless as possible. Further contact information will be distributed locally and on our website.

Tariff simplification

We continue to work on simplifying the Criminal, Family, and CFCSA Tariffs. For details, please see the discussion papers on our website at www.lss.bc.ca/lawyers/newTariff.asp.

Highlights of the Criminal Tariff include:

- Consolidation of current tariff items into 27 billable tariff items
- Classification of offences into Summary, Indictable, and Major (for tariff purposes)
- Introduction of a basic fee for Provincial Court and Supreme Court proceedings
- Creation of a non-trial resolution item that consolidates guilty pleas, stays, and other ways to conclude a case

Highlights of the Family and CFCSA Tariffs include:

- Consolidation of most preparation time into general preparation
- Additional preparation time for Supreme Court proceedings and CCO hearings
- Additional preparation and attendance for mediation and collaborative practice
- Extended Services, which provide a standard allocation of additional time for eligible cases
- Closing fee

Information meetings on the Tariff simplification

In order to provide information and get your feedback on the Tariff simplification, we are hosting a series of information meetings:

- **Vancouver March 2, 2010**
- **Kelowna March 15, 2010**
- **Prince George March 19, 2010**
- **Kamloops March 22, 2010**
- **Victoria March 24, 2010**
- **Surrey March 25, 2010**
- **Nanaimo March 29, 2010**

Further details will be provided locally closer to the meeting time. If you are unable to attend one of these sessions, please send your comments or questions to lawyersresources@lss.bc.ca.

Extended Family Services reinstated

Counsel with existing Emergency referrals or continuing Extended Family Services (EFS) referrals can now apply for EFS referrals. We encourage you to apply if your client has taken all reasonable steps to resolve the coverable issues in the case and serious issues remain unresolved. For cases that qualify for EFS, a standard allocation of hours will be provided; we expect you to manage your case within the available budget. We do not intend to issue renewals or additional hours if an EFS authorization has already been approved since the reinstatement of EFS. For details, see Notice to Counsel #72.

Please keep your billings up to date

We encourage you to take the time in March to ensure your billings are up to date. As the end of the fiscal year approaches, we need an accurate picture of our 2009/2010 spending in order to plan effectively for introducing new services in 2010/2011 (see Message to the Bar, December 17, 2009). Today, more than ever, uncertainty about outstanding accounts impedes our ability to plan services.

Category I and DRS billing end date

All outstanding Dispute Resolution referrals and all adult Category I referrals issued prior to **April 1, 2009** must be completed and bills submitted by **March 31, 2010**. For details, please refer to Notices to Counsel #62 (DRS) and #63 (Category I).