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Tariff simplification

Implementation of the simplified Family and Criminal tariffs on June 29 went smoothly. We have processed 187 accounts under the new tariff and already there is an improved clearance rate, especially for those using e-billing. If you are billing criminal accounts, please ensure you are not using tariff codes instead of fee amounts, as this has caused problems on some accounts. We will post a Criminal Quick Reference guide next week. We have also noticed some lawyers are not billing the Provincial Court fee where the criteria are met; please review the criteria. We continue to work on a simplified tariff for CFCSA cases. A revised CFCSA model tariff will be posted on our website in August. This revision takes into account feedback we have received to date; however, further comments will be appreciated. We aim to implement the simplified CFCSA tariff at the end of October.

Congratulations to Herb Chambers, the first lawyer to bill under the simplified tariff! We sent a card and small gift to congratulate Herb and thank him for serving legal aid clients for over 25 years.

Extended Family Services (EFS)

After the EFS tariff was reintroduced February 9, 2010 (see Notice to Counsel #72), we did not receive as many requests for EFS as expected. To be eligible, a client must have a current referral and the hours available on the emergency referral must have been used reasonably to address the issues that led to the initial referral. Please review the EFS criteria and consider submitting an opinion letter to Case Management.

Family Duty Counsel (FDC) — Service enhancements

We have augmented the budget for the FDC program and added more hours of advice services to locations with the highest demand. Kelowna and New Westminster will now have two FDCs five days a week, and several other locations will have extra non-court advice days added to the schedule. Family Advice Lawyer clinics are now available in eight Family Justice Centre locations: Kamloops, Kelowna, Nanaimo, New Westminster, Prince George, Vancouver, Victoria, and Surrey.

Lead family duty counsel contracts

We are requesting Expressions of Interest (EOI) for Lead family duty counsel contracts in Kamloops, Kelowna, Nanaimo, New Westminster, Prince George, and Victoria. The EOI, together with precedent contracts for each region, are available on our website. Notice of the contract was sent July 23, 2010 to all family law vendors. The competition closes **August 16, 2010** at 4:30 p.m. For more information, please contact Linda Thiessen at linda.thiessen@lss.bc.ca.

Practice resources for lawyers

Did you know that there are a number of resources for lawyers on our website at www.lss.bc.ca → Lawyers → Practice resources? Each month, we will highlight different resources for you. This month's highlights are:

- **Poverty Law Primer** — This manual covers welfare law, housing, debt, foreclosure, bankruptcy, and employment insurance issues. As there is often a constellation of problems underlying child protection concerns, the CFCSA tariff allows you to bill up to four hours to assist clients if it will likely help resolve the CFCSA issue. The primer is designed to help you navigate potentially unfamiliar legal issues.
- **Gladue rights and First Nations Court** — This fact sheet provides an overview of Gladue rights (rights under the *Criminal Code* that apply to anyone who self-identifies as Aboriginal). It also explains what a Gladue report is and provides some basic questions that can help Aboriginal defendants and their lawyers get started on preparing a Gladue report. The fact sheet also provides information on the First Nations Court in New Westminster.

Family Law in BC website updates

Effective **July 1, 2010**, new forms and processes apply to all Supreme Court civil and family law cases. We [updated the materials](#) on the [Family Law in BC](#) website accordingly, and now link directly to the new PDF "smart forms" on the [Attorney General's Court Services Branch](#) website. These "smart forms" are the first step towards true e-filing; eventually, users will be able to fill in forms online.