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## Transition to e-services and EFT

Last month, we let you know about the upcoming transition by 2012/2013 to mandatory e-billing and direct deposit (also known as EFT — electronic funds transfer). Phase one of this transition begins July 1, 2011, as we begin streamlining our administrative workload. Most recently, we have been processing paper accounts weekly; we will now begin reviewing them bi-weekly. Payments by cheque will shift from once a week to every two weeks. For example, this month we will mail payments on July 7 and July 21. We encourage you to sign up for e-billing and EFT as soon as you can to avoid processing delays. In light of the current postal strike, now would be an ideal time! Tariff staff are happy to assist you during this transition.

## Supreme Court bail reviews — Requests for authorization

Effective immediately, requests for authorization of Supreme Court bail reviews should be sent to Case Management, rather than Appeals, at fax number 604-681-7963. In your request, please outline the reason(s) for the initial detention and any change in circumstances or errors in law or principle that you feel will result in a successful release of the client. If approved, your authorization for the bail review will be accompanied with an authorization to obtain transcripts of the preceding bail hearing. Therefore, please advise us of the previous bail hearing date and the service delivery type of transcript required. A separate Request for Authorization of Transcripts will not be required.

## New: Gladue report disbursement pilot

To support the important remedial aspects of *Gladue* for Aboriginal clients, LSS will begin funding *Gladue* reports as an expert report disbursement item, effective July 1, 2011. LSS Aboriginal Services has trained 25 Aboriginal advocates from communities province-wide to prepare *Gladue* reports for Aboriginal clients who have a bail or sentencing hearing. The report writers from this roster will be matched to clients according to cultural understanding of the client's community, geographic proximity (for in-person interviews), and availability. The writers will require eight weeks to prepare a report.

Lawyers can request a *Gladue* report by submitting a *Request for Authorization of Disbursements* form to Case Management. Approval for reports will be based on available budget, and one or more of the following criteria:

- single parent with dependent children
- youth
- lengthy record
- facing an indictable charge (excluding first degree murder)
- facing a federal prison sentence
- mental health, addiction, and/or FASD issues
- Indian residential school survivor **or** former foster child
- community and family support
- has a bail hearing

This pilot will fund approximately 50 reports over the next 10 months. LSS will then evaluate the project based on sentencing/bail outcomes and input from the clients, lawyers, report writers, and courts.

## Poll and survey validate referral lawyers' hard work

Thanks to the dedicated work of referral lawyers and workers across BC, public and client satisfaction about legal aid remains steady. In April, LSS released recent public opinion polls and client surveys (full details at [www.legalaid.bc.ca](http://www.legalaid.bc.ca) in "About us — Our reports") that showed general satisfaction with the work lawyers and LSS are doing — despite the challenges legal aid is facing.

LSS's seventh annual **public opinion poll** showed that 92% of respondents agreed that every British Columbian should have access to legal aid even if that means spending more to reach those in rural and remote communities. A solid 75% also agreed that LSS should help clients address problems related to their legal issues, such as housing or mental health problems.

The second tri-annual **client survey** revealed that once again a majority of clients (75% in 2011) felt that they were well represented by their lawyer. Most clients surveyed said their lawyer treated them fairly and kept them well informed throughout. Client satisfaction with legal aid services overall did drop slightly, however, from 64% in 2007 to 62% in 2011. LSS is looking into ways to improve these figures.