



Tariff improvements

On June 15, 2006, LSS implemented changes to the Immigration, Family, CFCSA, and Disbursements Tariffs. Please see Notice to Counsel #50 for details. These changes are part of our ongoing commitment to tariff renewal and include:

- Increased preparation time for mediation in family and CFCSA cases
- Coverage of standard disbursements for Limited Scope Referrals
- Actual attendance time for IRB hearings in immigration cases
- Changes for interpreters and translations

The changes are on our website at www.lss.bc.ca (go to “For lawyers,” “Guide to Legal Aid Tariffs”). LSS is currently reviewing the Immigration Tariff in keeping with our tariff renewal principles and in response to recent information provided to us by immigration lawyers.

Electronic disclosure

In criminal cases, the Crown has increasingly been providing disclosure in electronic form. Earlier this year, LSS responded by creating a new disbursement item for printing electronic disclosure. This allows counsel to bill up to \$150 without prior authorization. Requests exceeding this amount required authorization based upon cost estimates provided by counsel. In some cases, the amount to be printed was very large, and LSS has been holding off on these authorizations because our budget did not provide for these costs.

The society has now approved funding for cases where substantial printing or other costs related to electronic disclosure are warranted. There are two ways counsel can submit proposals for funding of printing or other costs:

1. As part of a budget proposal submitted pursuant to the Strategic Case Assessment Program (SCAP); or
2. As part of a disbursement request.

We request that counsel prioritize the areas of disclosure to be printed rather than simply proposing that all disclosure be printed.

Reduced GST rate

On May 2, 2006, the Federal Government announced a reduction in the GST rate from 7% to 6%. This new

rate will take effect July 1, 2006. All payments processed by LSS up to June 30, 2006, will include 7% GST. Payments processed after June 30, 2006, will include 6% GST.

If you have any questions regarding the reduced GST rate, please contact the Finance Helpdesk at helpdesk.finance@lss.bc.ca or (604) 601-6111.

Now live — electronic fund transfer (EFT) for lawyers

LSS is pleased to announce that pilot testing for EFT and “My payments” was a success and that the service is now available province-wide.

Lawyers can register for this service via our website at www.lss.bc.ca (under “For Lawyers,” “Online resources”), by e-mail at helpdesk.finance@lss.bc.ca, or by calling the Finance Helpdesk at (601) 601-6111. Applications for EFT will be processed in the order in which they are received.

Mentoring update

In December, LSS announced two new pilot projects for mentoring assistance and apprentice counsel that are designed to encourage mentoring among tariff lawyers and provide opportunities for “hands on” learning to lawyers with less than five years of experience. Mentoring assistance is available in all tariff areas (criminal, family, immigration, and appeals), while apprentice counsel will generally be limited to large and complex criminal cases. See www.lss.bc.ca/For_lawyers/online_resources.htm (go to “LSS programs and policies”). If you meet the guidelines, LSS encourages you to submit a request for mentoring assistance or apprentice counsel to the Managing Lawyer, Tariff Services, by fax at (604) 681-7963.

Family update — input sought

LSS plans to implement enhancements to family coverage and services this fall. We invite your response to a discussion paper, to be posted at www.lss.bc.ca in early July, outlining proposed directions for expanded family coverage. Comments received by July 17, 2006 will be used to supplement the family law services evaluation currently underway. The evaluation will help identify where to direct resources and determine how services should be expanded. It involves interviewing family clients to assess all services and find out how people deal with issues over time, including re-emerging problems.