



# THE ADVISORY

## OUR MISSION

To serve the public interest by promoting a high standard of legal services and professional conduct through the governance and regulation of an independent legal profession.

## From the President: An Obligation to Support Legal Aid Plans

By Perry Mack, QC, President, Law Society of Alberta

Lawyers hold a privileged position in our society and with that position comes responsibilities. Lawyers taking on new cases have an obligation to ensure that legal services are generally available to those that require them, which includes an obligation to support legal aid plans and referral services.

In this issue of the Advisory we focus on the issues facing Legal Aid Alberta in fulfilling its mandate to provide legal services to those who are unable to pay for those services. The Law Society has consistently taken the position that a properly funded legal aid program is necessary to a functional system of justice. Along with funding, a legal aid program requires a roster of lawyers qualified and ready to do the work.

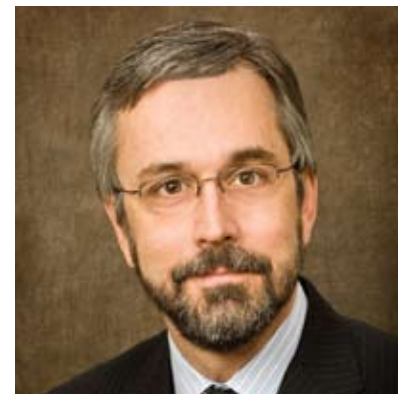
In mid-2008, Legal Aid Alberta reported a decline in their numbers of roster lawyers. From 2004 to 2007, the number of lawyers taking on new legal aid cases annually dropped by nearly two-thirds from 1,198 to 466. This is a serious concern as the demands upon the legal aid program continue to grow.

In its 2008 Annual Report, LAA reported that the number of assists has steadily grown to 161,400 in 2007/08 from 135,400 in 2003/2004. The number of assists by case types in this time period show that criminal youth assists have increased to 20,000 from 17,100, criminal adult assists have grown to 118,400 from 103,200 and civil assists have increased to 23,000 from 11,100.

We recognize that in Alberta there are many opportunities for lawyers, particularly those who practice family and criminal law.

A vibrant economy has also increased demand for legal aid services. Legal Aid Alberta fills a vital role in the justice system and I expect the profession will rise to the occasion and provide the necessary support for its services.

This is my last message as President of the Law Society of Alberta. It has been an honour and a privilege to hold this office. ■■



Perry Mack, QC, President,  
Law Society of Alberta

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Five decades of service by three lawyers were celebrated by the Law Society of Alberta on November 27, 2008 in Edmonton. Top row, left to right, Perry Mack, QC, LSA President, The Honourable Peter Caffaro, Norman Simons and his son Michael Simons.

Bottom row, left to right: Patricia Caffaro, Mrs. Oli Simons, and daughter Paula Simons. Missing was 50-year long service award recipient John C. Weir, QC.



# THE ADVISORY

## Billing Made Easy

Legal Aid Alberta is focusing on providing roster lawyers with tools to simplify the experience of taking legal aid certificates. One development is a highly-efficient online billing site. The new site will allow roster lawyers to securely access their account information online and at their convenience. By simply acquiring an active user ID and password, roster lawyers will have the ability to submit bills online; access taxation summaries, outstanding & processed (paid) certificates, and cheque information; and have the ability to submit express billings and duty counsel billings online. ■■

## TravelAssist Program

Legal Aid Alberta has introduced the TravelAssist program to simplify travel necessary while working on legal aid certificates. It is proving itself to be a useful value-added service. Gone are the days of out-of-pocket travel expenses as TravelAssist has been set up with existing suppliers to allow for direct billing to Legal Aid for flights and select hotels. Further bonuses to the program include preferred rates at certain hotels and Budget Rent-A-Car credit card billing directly to LAA. ■■

## Join the Legal Aid Alberta Roster Today!

If you are a private bar lawyer and are interested in taking legal aid cases, you can apply to become one of over 600 Legal Aid Alberta roster lawyers. Please fill out the Legal Aid Alberta roster application form and submit by email on the Legal Aid Alberta website at [www.legalaid.ab.ca](http://www.legalaid.ab.ca) ■■

## Lawyers Essential to the Success of Legal Aid Alberta

*By Sarah Florio, Communications, Legal Aid Alberta*

Legal Aid Alberta is an organization dedicated to ensuring that their clients are connected with skilled lawyers. Private bar participation in legal aid is essential to the success and sustainability of its program.

Currently, LAA is experiencing the impact of a 61 per cent decline (since 2005) in the number of active lawyers on its roster (private bar). This decline has produced a noticeable strain on both LAA and the justice system overall as more unrepresented litigants appear in court every day. Legal Aid Alberta is challenged to make itself easier to do business with, so that lawyers are motivated to support the program.

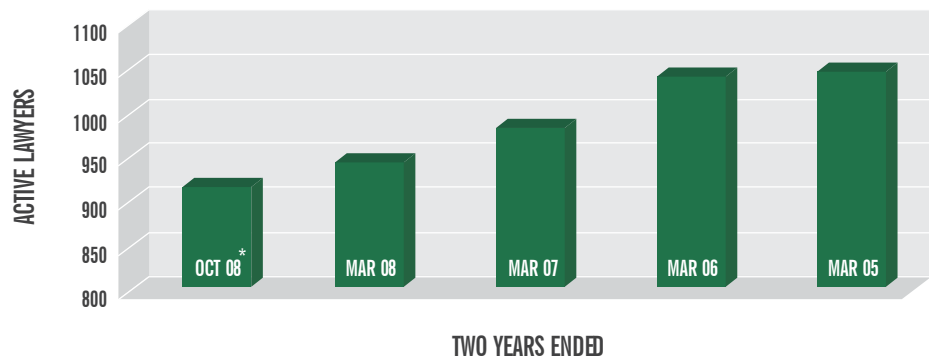
In early 2008, a comprehensive survey of roster and non-roster lawyers provided LAA with a defined focus on how to maintain the participation of lawyers in legal aid work. Legal Aid Alberta appreciates that its tariff may often just cover operational costs for many lawyers, but is confident that improved processes and value-added services, combined with the legal profession's desire to aid those who cannot otherwise afford representation, will encourage lawyers to take on legal aid cases. One particular improvement was seen in February 2008 when LAA introduced a new, simplified tariff which also made it possible for students-at-law to accept their own certificates.

Another step forward was seen with LAA's announcement that it would be designing a new, user-friendly online billing site. With the launch set for early 2009, the new online billing site will offer roster lawyers easy, secure access to their accounts online and accelerate the compensation process.

Also, LAA is developing a roster lawyer recognition program, a redesigned and interactive roster website portal, and a mentorship program for lawyers working on legal aid files. All of these improvements have been developed to assist Legal Aid's Roster partners in being successful with their files. Support for lawyers who do legal aid work is especially vital with the expansion of LAA's financial eligibility guidelines and the subsequent potential coverage of an additional 6400 Albertans in need.

The services that Legal Aid Alberta provides to low-income Albertans in need of legal support are vital to ensuring equal access to justice for all Albertans. Without the expertise and willingness of Alberta lawyers to accept legal aid certificates, the goal of ensuring equal access to justice will stall. Legal Aid Alberta welcomes suggestions from the private bar as to how we can further improve our services and inquiries about how to join the LAA Roster. Please direct comments or inquiries to [roster@legalaid.ab.ca](mailto:roster@legalaid.ab.ca) ■■

### ACTIVE LAWYERS ON ROSTER



*\*Legal Aid has since recognized that measuring the number of lawyers taking new files on an annual basis is not reflective of the number of lawyers working on LAA cases. It is changing the benchmarks to report on new cases taken over 2 years. Based on this (and a recent update of the LAA roster), there are currently over 900 active lawyers.*

## How LSA supports Lawyers Providing Pro Bono Services

By Don Thompson, QC, Executive Director, Law Society of Alberta



The Law Society of Alberta has provisions in its insurance requirements to provide support for those lawyers who provide pro bono legal services.

These provisions are in alignment with the LSA's third strategic goal which is to "manage risk and stand up for the public interest in the principles of justice". In realizing this goal, the LSA strives to be an advocate to protect the public, increase access to legal services and preserve the rule of law.

If you are an active member of the LSA and provide pro bono services through the Volunteer Lawyers Service Program, Calgary Legal Guidance, and Edmonton Centre for Equal Justice, you are deemed exempt from liability insurance coverage. You are automatically covered under the group professional liability insurance policy for this volunteer work. Please see Rule 148 (2.1).

### Pro Bono Law Alberta fully operational

Pro Bono Law Alberta is now operating at capacity with all positions staffed in the LSA's Calgary office. The not-for-profit organization promotes access to justice by creating and promoting opportunities for lawyers to provide pro bono legal services.

Executive director **Gillian Marriott**, who practised family law with Dunphy Best Blocksom LLP, commenced her role January 5, 2009. The PBLA team includes project manager **Cecelia Frohlick**, executive assistant **Myra Skerrett**, and program coordinator **Bianca Cooper** (contract position). Pro bono lawyer **Janice Pasay** provides pro bono services to PBLA for outreach to the legal profession. This past summer, PBLA hired two summer students entering their third year of law at the University of Calgary, **Aidan Henderson** and **Adolfo Peters**.

### New Staff Welcomed and New Positions Open

The Law Society of Alberta welcomed new staff **Dora Choi** as a claims examiner for ALIA, and **David Baker** as Business Analyst with the IT department. Currently the LSA is seeking to fill several senior and key positions. They include that of **Director of Policy and Research, Counsel, Complaints Resolution Officer** and **Accountant**.

For more details on these positions, please visit [www.lawsociety.ab.ca](http://www.lawsociety.ab.ca). The Law Society of Alberta values diversity in its workforce and equal access to opportunity. All inquiries and applications will be handled with the highest level of confidentiality.

Interested candidates should contact **Maureen Forbes** at 1-800-272-8839 or e-mail [Maureen.Forbes@lawsociety.ab.ca](mailto:Maureen.Forbes@lawsociety.ab.ca) ■■

## Distinguished Service Awards Recognize Outstanding Lawyers

Four outstanding Alberta lawyers were recognized for excellence at the 2009 Distinguished Service Awards on January 30, 2009. The Law Society of Alberta and the Canadian Bar Association - Alberta presented awards to:

- **John B. Ballem, QC** for Distinguished Service in Legal Scholarship,
- **J. Alan Bryan, QC** for Distinguished Service to the Community,
- **Anne S. de Villars, QC** for Distinguished Service to the Profession, and
- **Douglas H. McCallum** for Distinguished Service in Pro Bono Legal Service. ■■

## Two Ways to Declare a CPD Plan

Declaring a Continuing Professional Development Plan online has just been made easier. If you have already made your CPD declaration, it is not necessary to make another declaration at this time. If you have not received an e-mail from [info@lesonline.org](mailto:info@lesonline.org) confirming that you have made a CPD declaration through [www.CPDalberta.ca](http://www.CPDalberta.ca), you must continue as set out below.

New Rules 67.1 and 67.2 were added to the Rules of the Law Society of Alberta and can be found at [www.lawsociety.ab.ca](http://www.lawsociety.ab.ca). You must prepare a CPD plan and make your declaration no later than **15 March 2009**.

There are two ways to declare that you have prepared a Continuing Professional Development Plan. You may:

- Declare online using the planning tools at [www.CPDalberta.ca](http://www.CPDalberta.ca). If you have already made a CPD plan, you can make the declaration right now by pressing the "I Have a Plan and Wish to Declare" button. Use of online tools is optional.
- OR
- Declare on the Member Information Update Form which will be mailed to you in the next few weeks.

If you have not yet prepared a plan and need more information, please read the document, "What Must I Do?" document, available on the CPD pages at [www.lawsociety.ab.ca](http://www.lawsociety.ab.ca)

Please complete your plans and make your declarations before 15 March 2009. Contact information: [cpd@lawsociety.ab.ca](mailto:cpd@lawsociety.ab.ca) or ph. 403-229-4766. ■■

## “Know Your Client” Online Self-Study Module Now Available

A new online self-study module assists lawyers in understanding the new “know your client” rules. It is available at [www.lsaonline.org/courseware/knowyourclient/](http://www.lsaonline.org/courseware/knowyourclient/) and was developed jointly by the Law Society and the Legal Education Society of Alberta. New rules on client identification and verification came into effect December 31, 2008. Earlier in December, the Federation of Law Societies gave final approval to an amended Model Rule.

### Important Changes to Note:

- New definition and exemption for electronic funds transfers.
- Revised definitions of financial institutions and public bodies, which include reference to subsidiaries.
- New definition of “reporting issuer”, to take the place of references to companies that are not private companies.
- Exemptions for duty counsel.
- Expanded exemptions for financial institutions, public bodies and reporting issuers.
- Deletion of the exemption which formerly applied to funds paid to another lawyer in trust on the direction of the client.
- New concept of “third party” which replaces the earlier reference to “third party beneficiary or principal”.
- New requirement to collect information about third party organizations’ directors, shareholders and owners.
- Expanded list of allowable guarantors for non-face-to-face verification of individuals.
- New language regarding the obligation to withdraw when the lawyer knows or ought to know that he or she is or would be assisting a client in fraud or other illegal conduct, replacing the earlier language which referred to reasonable suspicions.

Please visit [www.lawsociety.ab.ca](http://www.lawsociety.ab.ca) to review the amended rules, download the implementation guideline, and view the client identification and verification flow chart. ■■

## Ethically Speaking

### Legal Aid Lawyers and the New Client Identification Rules

By Nancy Carruthers, Practice Advisor, Law Society of Alberta



As we are all aware, the new client identification and verification rules came into force in Alberta on December 31, 2008. Since the LSA first approved the Model Rule on Client Identification and Verification Requirements from the Federation of Law Societies earlier in 2008, there have been some significant changes. The amendment that most directly affects Legal Aid lawyers is the exemption for duty counsel. The rules do not apply to:

a lawyer providing legal services as part of a duty counsel program sponsored by a non-profit organization, except where the lawyer engages in or gives instructions in respect of the receiving, paying or transferring of funds other than an electronic funds transfer.

This is also a welcome exemption for the duty counsel programs sponsored by our non-profit pro bono legal clinics.

For the rules to apply, there must first be a retainer for the provision of legal services. In the case of non-profit legal clinics or law lines which provide summary legal advice in the course of one meeting or discussion, the lawyer will not be “retained” within the meaning of the rules. This analysis will also apply to lawyers who provide summary advice over the phone and who are not subsequently retained in the traditional sense. For example, Brydges counsel or private criminal defence counsel who provide summary advice to drivers who have been apprehended on suspicion of drunk driving, or who have been otherwise detained, are not considered to be retained and not subject to the application of the Rules unless they are later retained for the individual’s ongoing defence. If, however, a lawyer charges for summary advice on an initial consultation, then the rules will apply even if no ongoing retainer subsequently results.

If the lawyer agrees to represent an individual and otherwise enters into a retainer in the traditional sense, the obligations under the rules will obviously be triggered. If, for example, a lawyer in a non-profit clinic agrees to the ongoing representation of a client, the rules will apply, even if the client is not paying fees for the lawyer’s services.

If a lawyer acts as a friend of the court, assisting an unrepresented party on his or her own initiative or at the request of the court, the rules will not apply unless the services move beyond the provision of summary legal advice. You do not have to engage in identification or verification of your client if acting as an agent for another Canadian lawyer, or acting for a client referred to you by another Canadian lawyer, if you have established that the other lawyer has already complied with the rules with regard to that client. Lawyers accepting Legal Aid assignments will be responsible for complete identification (and verification, if applicable) as it is not sufficient to rely on the information contained in Legal Aid application forms and certificates provided to roster counsel at the time of their retainer.

### The exemption for “proceedings”

Identification must be copied and retained whenever a lawyer is handling a matter in which funds are received, paid or transferred by or on behalf of a client. Lawyers are exempt from the client verification rules, which otherwise require a lawyer to obtain a copy of the client’s identification, if the funds in issue are:

- a) received from a peace officer, law enforcement agency or other public official acting in their official capacity;
- b) paid or received pursuant to a court order or to pay a fine or penalty;
- c) paid or received as a settlement of any proceedings; or
- d) paid or received for professional fees, disbursements, expenses or bail.

*continued on page 05 sidebar*

## Consider Code of Conduct Rule when Notarizing Document

By Rick Hilborn, QC, Complaints Resolution Officer, Law Society of Alberta



The Law Society of Alberta is, again, receiving complaints concerning documents that have been notarized or commissioned by lawyers despite the fact such documents, even on the most cursory examination, are legal “fictions”.

This problem was first reported in the Advisory in 2003. The documents are usually intended to be “served” in relation to a government proceeding requiring the filing of an income tax or GST return or in relation to court proceedings to which the person presenting the document is subject (although this may not be clear from the document, itself).

The problem that arises is that a lawyer affixing his or her signature and notary seal to the document, (as well, in some cases, his or her name stamp with the description “Barrister and Solicitor”), gives these documents the appearance of having a “legal import” which they clearly do not have.

This is to advise that any member who notarizes or commissions such a document might possibly breach the provisions of Rule 5 of Chapter 10 of the Code of Professional Conduct, which states that:

“A lawyer must not participate in the preparation or delivery of a document resembling a document issued by a court or other authority and intended to deceive the recipient.”

The Commentary to this Rule points out that:

“Knowledge of legal forms and processes confers an advantage on lawyers since a large segment of society is inexperienced with, and may be wary of, documents appearing to have legal import. The use

of technical knowledge for the purposes of coercion or intimidation would constitute an abuse of the position of lawyers in the legal system.”

The commentary then goes on to cite the example of “a document designed to resemble a statement of claim or subpoena so that the recipient will be misled as to the import of the document”. Since the commentary is only intended to give examples, there is a reasonable prospect that it may apply equally well to documents that resemble commercial documents or “affidavits”.

Some of the documents that have been the subject of complaint have been a “Self-Executing Security Agreement” (whatever that may be), “Indemnity Bonds” (which, on reading, make no sense) and documents with “legal sounding” designations such as a “Certificate of Assent”, “Notice by Written Communication/Security Agreement”, “Notice of Assent to Contract”, “Affidavit of Obligation Commercial Lien”, “Entitlement Order”, “Notice of Claim of Right” and the like, none of which bear the signature of the other party to whom they are addressed and against whom the so-called “legal rights” are being claimed.

By their title alone, there is a suggestion that these documents are “issued” by (or pursuant to) some “authority”. We have also seen Affidavits sworn and notarized (or commissioned) which depose to “facts” that make no sense and are sometimes titled “Affidavit of Certificate of Service” and “Affidavit of Negative Averment”.

As mentioned, upon reading these documents, one finds their legal import almost impossible to fathom. Since they have no legal basis (or, in the case of the affidavits, they depose to “facts” that make no sense), it is unlikely they were prepared by, or with the advice of, any of our members. Most likely, the individual or individuals presenting them for notarization or for commissioning prepared the documents themselves or they were provided to them by another member of the “group” who uses these types of documents.

*continued on sidebar*

## Ethically Speaking

*Continued from page 04*

Any lawyer involved in a litigation matter must be aware that the term “proceedings” means a legal action, application or other proceeding commenced before a court of any level, a statutory tribunal in Canada or an arbitration panel or arbitrator established pursuant to provincial, federal or foreign legislation and includes proceedings before foreign courts. Using the simplest example of a typical civil action, this means you must obtain a copy of your client’s identification if settling a matter prior to the filing of a statement of claim.

**For More Information** - Any questions of concerns regarding the operation of the Client Identification and Verification Rules may be directed to the Practice Advisors. ■■

## Consider Code of Conduct

*Continued from left*

If any documents are presented to you for notarization or commissioning the legal import of which, in your opinion after reviewing them, is highly questionable, please consider carefully the provisions of Rule 5 of Chapter 10. As lawyers, we should not take the attitude that we are “merely notarizing or commissioning” the document, since that may constitute “participation in” its “preparation or delivery” contrary to Rule 5. Accordingly, if an individual presents such a document intended to have “legal import” and is prepared to swear to it before you, or asks you to witness and notarize their signature on it, or to provide a notarially certified copy of it, it may not be proper to acquiesce in their request. In view of the “harm” which Rule 5 of Chapter 10 is intended to address, we must not lend documents, the legal import of which is suspect, the credibility of our name, notary seal, and our “position in the legal system”. ■■

## Lawyers Helping Lawyers

By Craig Kinsman, Executive Director, Assist

Twenty years ago, a small group of Alberta lawyers wanted to help other lawyers experiencing personal difficulties. They formed Assist. That tradition of lawyers helping other lawyers continued in 2008 in a number of remarkable ways.

For example, a group of the recent Queen's Counsel appointees commemorated their good fortune (earned after many years of exemplary service to our profession) by organizing a campaign to encourage the 2008 QC class to donate to Assist. Not to be outdone, a group of 2006 Q.C. appointees took up the idea and encouraged their 2006 cohorts to support Assist. These campaigns have raised just over \$18,000 and counting. These leaders in our profession are hoping they have started a new tradition of giving back that might be emulated by future QC's.

The Calgary Bar Association also provided significant funding for Assist in 2008 by generously donating funds raised from their annual golf tournament.

Beyond these prominent efforts, Assist has gratefully received financial donations from members of the Law Society from all parts of Alberta. We've also seen significant volunteer efforts throughout the year that have directly impacted the lives of those in need and the profession generally.

These contributions have come in addition to the ongoing support we receive from the Law Society of Alberta, the Canadian Bar Association (Alberta), Burnet, Duckworth & Palmer LLP and the many other law firms, corporations and individuals who make it possible for Assist to exist.

Thanks to all of you. Your time and donations allow us to continue to help lawyers, articling students and their families in personal distress. *Assist is an independent, charitable society. For more information please visit our website at [www.albertalawyersassist.ca](http://www.albertalawyersassist.ca)*

## The Healing Power of "Sorry"

By J.R. (Roy) Nickerson, Q.C., Chair, Civil Practice Advisory Committee



It seems rather fitting that at a time when Canadian Parliament struggles for the appropriate words of atonement in an attempt to heal the wounds related to

aboriginal residential schools, the Government of Alberta is adopting "Apology" Legislation. Besides the obvious, the *raison d'être* of the legislation is to protect an insured from being denied coverage because his or her words of contrition may constitute an admission of liability, which may be proscribed by the wording contained in an insurance policy. The wording of the legislation closely follows that of Saskatchewan and other jurisdictions and defines an apology as:

"An expression of sympathy or regret, a statement that one is sorry, or any other words or actions indicating contrition or commiseration, whether or not the words or actions admit or imply an admission of fault. . ."

And further an apology does not:

"... constitute an express or implied admission of fault or liability. . ."  
 "... void, impair or otherwise affect any insurance coverage. . . and shall not be taken into account in any determination of fault or liability in connection with that matter."

Nor is it: "admissible in any court as evidence of . . . the default or liability. . . of the person in connection with that matter."

The latter provision has the potential to deny a victim of cogent evidence of liability and for that reason is of dubious value. When a cyclist bounces off the bumper of a tort-feasor's SUV, he or she, in their amnesic state, may not recollect exactly how the accident happened, but may recollect a later admission by the tort-feasor that they were regretfully in the wrong place at the wrong time so far as the rules of the road are concerned.

The above concern aside, there is no doubt that the time has come for something new to be injected into a compensation system where oft times financial compensation is inadequate to address something as elusive as "loss of enjoyment of life." Whether the words used are truly heartfelt or merely exculpatory utterances, motivated by nothing more than a desire to escape the consequences of carelessness, they may add a new and useful dimension to the present process.

It is obviously impossible to quantify the value of well timed and well placed words of regret or the taking of responsibility for an injury arising out of a negligent act. Some American jurisdictions are experimenting with the power of apology in the medical malpractice context. How often is a Plaintiff motivated to pursue a claim not so much by the pain inflicted by a very human and momentary lapse but by the prolonged and vehement denial of liability through years up to trial, during discoveries and interlocutory wrangling?

Whether the apology is in a form of acknowledgment of error or a request for forgiveness, it certainly can't hurt to have it added to the option of advocates involved in dispute resolution. ■■

## CPLED Licensing Based on Completing Evaluations

By Trevor Clarke, Managing Director, CPLED Alberta



Recent revisions to the CPLED program mean that the licensing function of the CPLED Program will now be based solely on successful completion of the eight competency evaluations. The most significant change to the CPLED Program approved by the Benchers in October 2008 is that the 15 assignments will no longer be graded. Any student submitting an answer to an assignment will receive “rich” or meaningful feedback.

The following shows the results of these changes on the outcomes of Module five, the first full online module that incorporated the changes.

The results for Competency Evaluation Five (CE5) are as follows:

# of Assignments Completed	# of Students (/184)	Grade of CD *	Grade of CNYD **
3	136 (74%)	134	2
2	30 (16%)	28	2
1	7 (4%)	7	0
0	11 (6%)	9	2

\* Competency Demonstrated

\*\* Competency Not Yet Demonstrated

These results show that 98% (134 of 136) of the students who submitted all three assignments received a grade of CNYD. Of the students who did not submit all three of the assignments, 92% (44 of 48) received

a grade of CNYD. A student who did not complete all three of the assignments was therefore more than 5.5 times likely to receive a CNYD than a student who completed all of the assignments!

During informal discussions with CPLED staff, it appears that most of the nine students who received a grade of CD and who didn’t do the assignments cited either lack of time or already having practical experience on the subject as reasons. These students all agreed that they should take the time to compete the assignments unless they have had significant practical experience on the subject matter.

Some of the nine students followed a deliberate strategy of simply reviewing the assignments without submitting them. They then spent more time completing Competency Evaluation Five than they would have if they had completed all three of the assignments. This approach therefore allows them to gain some flexibility in terms of their time. All of these students emphasized the importance of the CPLED materials in completing the competency evaluation. While all of these students received a grade of CD for Competency Evaluation Five, it should be pointed out that a disadvantage of this approach is that the students do not receive any feedback, as they do not submit answers for their assignments.

The conclusion to be drawn from the above analysis is that, for most CPLED students, the surest way to receive a grade of CD on a competency evaluation is to complete all of the related assignments.

The analysis is based on the results of a single competency evaluation. CPLED staff will be tracking the results of the recent changes to the CPLED Program. ■■

## Grande Prairie Legal Guidance Clinic Opens

Pro Bono Law Alberta (PBLA) is pleased to announce the opening of a new legal clinic that will offer free legal guidance to individuals living on low income in Grande Prairie and surrounding communities. Grande Prairie Legal Guidance (GPLG) is a non-profit joint initiative between PBLA, the Community Village and Grande Prairie lawyers.

The new pro bono legal clinic will operate out of the Community Village in Grande Prairie and be staffed by a part-time program coordinator, Bianca Cooper.

“While pro bono programs can never replace an effective and properly funded legal aid system, they are an effective means to complement the existing services for low income individuals. This new clinic is an exciting way to help ensure that people who cannot afford the services of a lawyer are given a means of accessing the justice system,” stated Rod Jerke Q.C., President of Pro Bono Law Alberta and a Law Society of Alberta bencher.

According to Derek Van Tassel, a local lawyer on the PBLA organization committee, there has been a great response from the legal community to the opening of the clinic, with several lawyers already offering their assistance.

“This clinic will provide a foundation of equality and justice for members of the greater Grande Prairie community. It is a means for lawyers to give back to those who need their services the most and I am positive that Grande Prairie Legal Guidance will become a cornerstone of our growing community in the years to come,” concluded Van Tassel.

Grande Prairie Legal Guidance is modeled after other successful pro bono programs from across Alberta and will offer clinics twice-monthly. ■■

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The Advisory is published five times a year for the members, partners and key stakeholders of the Law Society of Alberta. Articles and comments should be directed to Sheila Serup at 403-229-4744, or [sheila.serup@lawsociety.ab.ca](mailto:sheila.serup@lawsociety.ab.ca)



SERVING  
*the* PUBLIC  
INTEREST

## SERVICES FOR LAWYERS

**Mentor Program:** A free service that provides lawyers with the names of experienced mentors or practitioners in family law, criminal law, wills and estates, real property law and civil litigation.

**Contact** 1-800-272-8839

**Practice Review:** A committee of the Law Society of Alberta that helps lawyers recognize areas of concern within their practices and provides information about resources and help to implement a program of change. Lawyers seeking practice review services will work with a panel of three members of the practice review committee and a staff person.

**Contact** Barbara Cooper, Manager,  
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**Contact** Nancy Carruthers, 403-229-4714 or toll free 1-866-440-4640  
[nancy.carruthers@lawsociety.ab.ca](mailto:nancy.carruthers@lawsociety.ab.ca)  
Ross McLeod, 780-412-2301 or toll free 1-800-661-2135  
[ross.mcleod@lawsociety.ab.ca](mailto:ross.mcleod@lawsociety.ab.ca)

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