Hourly rates increase effective September 12, 2006

As a further step in its tariff renewal process, the Legal Services Society (LSS) is increasing all its hourly legal fees except for criminal enhanced fees. Effective on all accounts received on or after September 12, 2006, hourly rates will increase as follows:

Tier	Hourly rate
1	$83.90
2	$88.10
3	$92.29

The society's tariff improvements, underway since 2005, are designed to address concerns raised during the tariff review (reported in *Managing for Results: LSS Tariff Renewal*), as well as to promote early — and stable — resolutions for clients. Other recent improvements include elimination of holdbacks, introduction of new tariff items (e.g., the administration fee), expanded hours for some services, and tiered rates.

Preparing your accounts

For accounts submitted on or after September 12, 2006, calculate your fees based on the tier 1 rate of $83.90, where it applies. The LSS accounts processing system will *not* make the adjustment automatically. If you are eligible for tier 2 or 3 rates, LSS will add the applicable tiered-rate increase to the amount claimed at the tier 1 rate of $83.90.

Upcoming adjustments to block fees and family tariff services

In addition to hourly rate increases, LSS plans to announce strategic increases to selected block fee items in October 2006. LSS will review the rates for block fee items, primarily in the criminal tariff, and implement increases for selected block fee items to ensure they better reflect the time involved and the relative importance of the services. Prior to implementation, the society will meet with an expanded Criminal Tariff Committee to review the proposed adjustments.

LSS is also completing a review of family law services and expects to announce additional improvements in this area in October.

The next revision of the *Guide to Legal Aid Tariffs* is scheduled for November and will incorporate all changes to hourly rates and block fees.

Edward Tanaka
Director, Legal Advice and Representation