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Update — *Making Justice Work* — LSS's report on legal aid and justice system reform

Following the release of LSS's advice to the attorney general, *Making Justice Work*, Executive Director Mark Benton, QC, participated in several media interviews. He highlighted the key role legal aid plays in the justice system, the need for funding that will attract lawyers to legal aid work, and the importance of focusing on outcomes and metrics. Read more at "[Scales of justice unbalanced in B.C.](#)" (*Vancouver Sun*) and "[Undernourished legal aid system needs funds](#)" (*Globe and Mail*). And hear Mark's province-wide interview on CBC Radio's [BC Almanac](#).

Stop dates on CFCSA referrals

The second anniversary of the simplified CFCSA tariff is approaching (November 17). Remember that stop dates on referrals issued prior to November 17, 2010 were shortened from three years to two (see [Notice to Counsel 74](#)). If your client's legal matters will not be resolved by the stop date, contact our [Case Management Section](#). Let us know of any upcoming court dates, outstanding issues, and the date you anticipate these issues will be resolved (if you can reasonably determine this). We will review your client's case for continued coverage and financial eligibility. If it's determined that your client continues to meet current coverage and eligibility guidelines, we may extend your service stop date or issue a new referral for you to bring your case into the current tariff.

E-authorizations for disbursements — pilot launched!

Fifty lawyers are currently participating in a pilot of e-authorizations for disbursements, our newest e-tool. In December, we'll analyze their feedback and make changes before we launch the tool province-wide in January. We appreciate their participation. All feedback will be valuable in launching an easy-to-use product, one that will generate a more efficient authorization process for you (and LSS). (Please note that this new disbursement tool excludes transcript requests.)

Provincial Court of BC — Court scheduling project survey — A message from the Office of the Chief Judge...

The Provincial Court is seeking the input of the Bar in the development of a new scheduling model. Please click [here](#) to access the anonymous survey. The deadline to complete the survey is **Monday, October 22, 2012**.

Crime rate trends

The provincial government's February 2012 green paper, *Modernizing British Columbia's Justice System*, highlights a criminal justice paradox: the crime rate is falling, but court costs and delays are increasing. This has significant implications for the society's budget planning, as well as for you, the tariff bar. The recent report to the attorney general by Geoffrey Cowper, QC, *A Criminal Justice System for the 21st Century*, has an excellent review of the situation (see part 3.1).

In summary:



- BC's crime rate has been dropping steadily over the past 10 years, from a high of 15,000 crimes per 100,000 population in the early 1990s to about 8,000 last year.
- The drop in reported crime is almost entirely due to a substantial drop in property crime, which has decreased sharply since 2003, from a high of close to 9,000 to fewer than 5,000 last year.
- Youth crime has dropped just as dramatically, from a rate that was once substantially higher than the national average to third-lowest in the country. One reason for this is a significant increase in the use of informal diversion by police.

LSS referral rates follow these trends, which impacts budgets and case costs. In the next issue, we will discuss what we refer to as the “referral paradox.”

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