

LAWYERS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM



Natalie LeBlanc

It gives me pleasure to report that the New Brunswick Lawyers' Assistance Program has had another solid year of activity and growth. We continue with increased usage rates of our counseling line and we now have a full complement of trained bilingual peer volunteers throughout the province of New Brunswick.

COUNSELLING SERVICE

In this past fiscal year, I am happy to report that we have once again helped over 40 individuals with problems related to their overall wellbeing. This number is made up of CBA members, spouses, students and their dependants. The problems range in nature and in depth and we are beginning to see certain trends which, we hope, will provide us with information to tailor our initiatives to be more efficient for our members.

Given the fact that our counseling service is confidential, we use metrics such as statistics to gauge whether our message is getting out to members. So far we have seen regular usage throughout the Province. We do, however, recognize that the NBLAP still has much work to do in certain communities; our statistics, which closely resemble last year's figures, illustrate that our presence still needs work in some areas of New Brunswick.

We have renewed our contract with our current Service Provider and continue to enjoy a good relationship. The Clinique de Psychologie Appliquée is a bilingual psychology firm located in Moncton who receives all of the calls placed to 1-888 315-2244. Our Service Provider then provides a triage service and identifies the proper professional help which might be required by any given caller. We currently pay \$130.00/hour for professional services and a monthly fee of \$520.00 for a variety of professional and administrative services.

On several occasions, we have also been able to take advantage of the relationship we have built with our Service Provider to give additional value to our program on quarterly conference calls with Peer Volunteers and other various meetings. We look forward to continuing our mutually-beneficial relationship in the coming years.

PEER VOLUNTEERS AND TRAINING

Growing our Peer Volunteer group and providing valuable training has been a major focus for our program in the past couple of years. Thanks in part to grants received from the Law Foundation and generous financing we've received from the Law Society of New Brunswick, the New Brunswick Branch of the Canadian Bar Association and the Insurance Management Committee of the Law Society, we have been able to train a group of Peer Volunteers in a variety of skills. This year we added a full-day session on "Coaching" given by David Veale of Saint John to the many skills currently held by our Peer Volunteers. We also held a Conference Call with members from Québec's Juris-Secours Program in order to better understand some of the successes and obstacles which have been faced by other jurisdictions.

We schedule quarterly conference calls with all of our Peer Volunteers and are continually looking for new topics and conference speakers. If anyone has any ideas or would like to contribute to these activities, please contact either myself or Lia Daborn. We are always grateful for any suggestions from our members.

PROMOTIONS

Our Committee strives to seek out opportunities for greater visibility for the NBLAP. It is also our goal to reach members from smaller communities who might particularly benefit from the services offered through our program. We continue to set up NBLAP promotional tables at every appropriate opportunity including the Mid Winter Meeting in Caraquet in February 2009. We also have regular speaking engagements at Université de Moncton, University of New Brunswick, the Bar Admissions Course, the Law Society Council Meeting and the CBA New Brunswick Branch Council Meeting. We continue, however, to be aware that there are many other opportunities, such as local bar association events, which would be a great way for us to spread the message about our services.

This next year will see us try to expand our promotional activities most notably in the smaller and more rural regions of the Province. We are also actively looking at formally developing a strategic wellness initiative for our members which would be useful in terms of general wellbeing and also potentially available for credit hours for the Mandatory Continuing Legal Education being introduced in 2010 by the Law Society of New Brunswick.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Operating a successful Lawyers' Assistance Program is rewarding but can also be very challenging. I would be remiss in this opportunity if I did not take the chance to formally thank each and every member of our Committee, our Peer Volunteers as well as the CBA New Brunswick Branch, including its Council for its continued support in all of our initiatives.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS MEMBRES DU COMITÉ

Chair / Présidente :

Karen Lee Lamrock, NB Dept. of Justice / Min. de la justice

Natalie LeBlanc, Office of Attorney General / Cabinet du procureur général

Jodi Lee-White, directrice des assurances, Barreau du N.-B./ Director of Insurance, Law Society of New Brunswick

Gale MacDonald, Q.C., c.r., Gale MacDonald Law Office
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Kevin Roherty, New Brunswick System Operator