

Legal Aid Ontario

# B3: Better Billing Bulletin

Issue #21 | August 2009

## **Faster Payment of Discretion Accounts - we heard you!**

An LAO survey indicated substantial dissatisfaction by the bar with the time taken to settle discretion accounts. In efforts to improve your satisfaction with our services, we are working hard to eliminate our discretion accounts backlog and pay you faster.

On June 1, 2009, the backlog stood at 570 accounts. As of August 21, the backlog stands at 250 (116 criminal, 134 civil). We've reduced the inventory by 320 accounts! By September, we will maintain no greater than 50 civil and 50 criminal discretion accounts for payment in inventory. Thank you for your patience.

Please always remember to attach your discretion letter and dockets when you submit an account that requires discretion. Failure to do so results in delays in processing and payment.

## **Late Billing Reduction Initiative**

We currently receive on average 10 late billed accounts a day. Late billed accounts result in delayed or denied payment and are costly to process. We would like to reduce the number of late billed accounts. The Lawyer Service Centre will be contacting late billers over the next three months to ensure a greater understanding of the late billing rule. If you are a late biller, please review our Late Billing Rule.

LAO is changing its late billing rule; we hope to implement a new, simpler rule this Winter.

## We've enhanced our regular disbursements

As a reminder, we've added some items to the list of regular disbursements that do not need authorization prior to billing, and we've increased some existing allowances.

- Enhanced Disbursements (Revised on August 26 /09)

You no longer need prior authorization for the following:

- Non medical reports to a maximum of \$150
- Non medical records to a maximum of \$150
- FIPPA Application Fee to a maximum of \$5
- Medical Records to a maximum of \$150

We've also made changes to some allowances, increasing the number of hours/pages you can bill without prior authorization and, in some instances, we've increased block fees. Hourly rates, however, remain the same.

*Please do not request authorization for these disbursements. Doing so will cause delay and increase administrative work for us responding to disbursement requests that do not require prior authorization. Please familiarize yourself with these changes and help us help you. Should you have questions, please call Disbursements at 416-979-2352 ext 5000 or 1-800-668-8258 ext.5000*

## Free Seminar for Criminal Lawyers & Duty Counsel

LAO is hosting a free seminar for criminal lawyers & duty counsel representing clients who are survivors of domestic abuse and other forms of trauma on Monday, September 14, 2009 from 5 pm - 7:30 pm. You may attend in-person at Legal Aid Ontario's Provincial Office in Toronto or On-line via Adobe Pro Connect. For further information and to RSVP, e-mail [crimlawseminar@lao.on.ca](mailto:crimlawseminar@lao.on.ca) or phone Michelle Davis toll free at 1-800-668-8258, ext. 5042 or locally 416-979-2352, ext. 5042.

## Tariff & Billing Handbook

Consult our Handbook regularly for billing information.

## Contact Information

Please click "*Review Your Address*" on your portal home/welcome page to verify the accuracy of your contact information and to update it if necessary. For assistance, contact the Lawyer Service Centre (416) 979-9934.

### Questions?

Please let us know if you have questions or if there are topics you'd like to see us cover by contacting the Lawyer Service Centre at [pl-lsc@lao.on.ca](mailto:pl-lsc@lao.on.ca)



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