

B3: Better Billing Bulletin







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Getting paid - our time commitments to you!

We are trying very hard to pay you faster. If your account is within tariff and submitted Online correctly, it will 'match' and we will pay your account within 24 to 28 days.

If your account fails to 'match' Online, it becomes part of our 'match exceptions' inventory of unpaid accounts that staff must examine. We aim to pay 70% of these accounts within 30 days and 90% within 60 days, providing we receive all the information required such as a discretion letter and detailed accounts.

We are running two to three weeks behind and apologize for the delay.

Accounts by region	Processing by date of receipt	Indicator
		 60 days or less  60 to 90 days  90 days of more
GTA Region	September 1 - 15	 60 to 90 days
SouthWest Region	August 16 - 31	 90 days of more
Central East & North Region	August 16 - 31	 90 days of more

You can help us help you by always attaching your account details and discretion letter to your Online accounts. This is the number one reason for delays in payment. Attach your account details and discretion letter to your Online accounts please! You'll be happy you did!!

If you are experiencing financial hardship and your account is outside our 60 days processing time frame, please e-mail Chris Carter at carterc1@lao.on.ca with a brief explanation of your situation.

If you have an inquiry regarding an unpaid account or would like to learn how to attach account details and discretion letters to your Online account, please contact the Lawyer Service Centre (416) 979-9934 or 1-866-979-9934.

Now available: Better, faster certificate acknowledgement

You may view certificates waiting to be acknowledged, in addition to area office approved amendments and authorizations, through *Legal Aid Online*.

In July, LAO added a feature to *Legal Aid Online* allowing you to view snapshots of certificates with status, dates and pertinent information. The enhancement means that you no longer have to wait to contact area offices for decisions on amendment requests and certificate updates. It also means that if you have *Legal Aid Online* ID you will no longer receive paper documentation for these decisions, which helps reduce administrative costs.

The process now allows you to view and access online the certificates for which you have been assigned as the lawyer of choice.

As with newly approved amendments and authorizations, you can choose to be automatically notified by email; however, now you can also opt for text message alerts. Client information is not disclosed in these messages so they will not violate client confidentiality.

For further information, questions & answers, please visit the “Hot Bytes” section at www.legalaid.on.ca.

Discretion Decisions Localized

In our April B3, we mentioned that Legal Aid Ontario was running a discretion pilot with the Districts of London and Northwest (Thunder Bay, Kenora, Fort Frances, Nisnawbi Aski) and the Area Offices of Toronto and Ottawa. The pilot localizes discretion decision-making, i.e., your District Area Director or a delegate makes the decision on your request for a discretionary increase. We recently expanded the pilot to include the Districts of Windsor, Hamilton-Kitchener, and Central (Barrie, Bracebridge, Parry Sound, Oshawa). Requests for discretion that cumulatively exceed 15 hours on a certificate will be made by District Area Directors or delegates from these districts or area offices. Discretion decisions less than 15 hours will continue to be made centrally by Provincial Office Lawyer Services & Payments staff.

There is no change to the way you submit requests for discretion or reviews of discretion decisions.

Discretion decisions made by area offices are captured on your Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) payment slip with the note “discretion decision made by area director or delegate”.

Having your local area director make discretion decisions ensures the area director can manage the certificate budget effectively and knowledge of local conditions and panel members are fully considered.

Tariff & Billing Handbook

Consult our Handbook regularly for billing information.

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



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