

College Conversation

The Newsletter of the British Columbia College of Social Workers

Welcome to the new British Columbia College of Social Workers, **BCCSW**

On November 20, 2008 the new *Social Workers Act* came into force. This created the **British Columbia College of Social Workers** to replace the previous Board of Registration for Social Workers. It also provides a modern legislative framework to regulate the profession in the public interest. This is consistent with legislation for other self-governing professions in British Columbia such as architects, physicians and surgeons, lawyers and teachers.

The College is the governing body responsible for ensuring the safe, ethical and competent practice of social work in the province. The Act obliges the College to exercise its powers and responsibilities in the interest of the public. As well as establishing standards of practice, the College must establish and use registration, inquiry, and discipline practices which are transparent, objective, impartial and fair.

These changes will result in improved procedural fairness and access by the public to relevant information but many aspects will remain unchanged from the days when the Board of Registration for Social Workers administered the profession. The registration status of registered social workers doesn't change. A new name hasn't brought a new office or new staff. The current Board will continue in place until an election is held in fall 2009. The Standards of Practice remain in effect. There will be a smooth transition from BRSW to BCCSW and we will continue to do our work as always, with no disruption in service to social workers or the public.

Elsewhere in this first issue of *College Conversation*, you can learn more about the *Social Workers Act* and its provisions. There's also information about new developments in the College including social work representation on the Board. In the next issue we will explain the election procedures in greater detail. 



BCCSW mandate

British Columbia College of Social Workers (BCCSW) is the regulatory body for the profession in British Columbia. Our mandate is to protect the public from preventable harm.

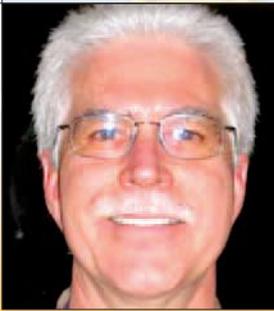
Season's Greetings

Our office will close at noon on Wednesday December 24, 2008 and reopen on Monday January 5, 2009.

The new *Social Workers Act*, a special edition of the BCCSW registrant newsletter

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From the Chair

Jim Campbell, MSW, RCSW

Chair, British Columbia College of Social Workers

Proclamation of the amended *Social Workers Act* has been the most waited for event in the history of the Board of Registration for Social Work since the original Act was created in 1969. While appropriate in its time, 40 years of increasing professionalism made the old Act inadequate for today's practice requirements. The

Ministry of Children and Family Development listened to these concerns. In this year's Spring Session, the B.C. Legislature passed Bill 35, *Social Workers Act*. In November the Lieutenant Governor in Council proclaimed the updated Act. The Regulations were quickly forthcoming and the College's Bylaws will come into effect early in 2009 after being posted for three months.

The new *Social Workers Act* creates a self-regulating College of Social Workers with a clear duty to protect the public. Being a College, there will be elections of the social work members to the board. It improves administrative fairness for social workers and the complaint review process. It prevents social workers from avoiding accountability by resigning before completion of inquiry reviews. It creates recognition of advanced social work practice areas, such as "clinical". It improves the organization's effectiveness by expanding registrants' involvement in regulatory committees. It also requires an online registry of all registered social workers.

Another historic first this year was that all ten provinces' social work regulatory boards have now joined the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB). ASWB is the umbrella organization for all social work regulatory boards in Canada and the United States (except California). Important aspects of ASWB's role (in addition to board education) are the examinations for levels of practice. The "clinical" test and designation which BRSW recently put in place is the same ASWB clinical examination that is taken in most states for the LCSW (Licensed Clinical Social Worker) designation. The ASWB examinations are psychometrically created and tested and are the standard examinations for all member boards: consequently, they are transferable between jurisdictions.

The inter-provincial Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT) and the B.C./Alberta Trade, Investment, and Labour Mobility Agreement (TILMA) continue to be topical

issues. The recent AIT changes require all provinces to reciprocally accept other provinces' professionals without further requirements. This change has opened a number of issues about accepting people from other jurisdictions. What happens if registrants do not have the same academic qualifications?

Take TILMA, for example. Alberta accepts its two-year diploma graduates as Registered Social Workers (RSW); this could mean that B.C. (and all other provinces) must accept these Alberta two-year graduates as RSWs. (By contrast, Alberta has stated they will not recognize B.C.'s two-year diploma holders as social workers). Together with seven other provinces' social work boards, the College (and the BRSW previously) is against lowering the RSW requirement of a Bachelor of Social Work to a two-year diploma. With the support of the Ministry of Children and Family Development, we are requesting that a "legitimate objective" be registered to maintain our standard. We are waiting to learn the outcome of this. In the meantime we are in the process of creating a competency profile to support the requirement of a degree for registration.

Next year, 2009, will be transformational for creating the B.C. College of Social Workers, establishing the election process over the summer, and having an AGM that coincides with the B.C. Association of Social Workers' annual fall conference. In closing, I would like to express my appreciation for being Chair of the Board during these historic changes. I look forward to the coming changes to fully actualize the creation of the B.C. College of Social Workers. 🌸

The Transition timeline: Dates to note

November 20, 2008	November 24, 2008	January 23, 2008	February 13, 2009	February 24, 2009	March–May 2009
<i>Social Workers Act</i> and Regulation come into force. B.C. College of Social Workers established.	Bylaws posted on College website for comments.	Deadline for registrants to submit expressions of interest for working on various committees to the College.	Board meeting: committee members appointed.	Bylaws are in force.	Regional meetings: information and celebration.

From the Registrar

Susan Irwin, RSW

Registrar, British Columbia College of Social Workers



It's been a long time coming! We are celebrating the creation of the British Columbia College of Social Workers and the enactment of a new *Social Workers Act*, a milestone in the development of social work practice in our province.

Achieving a self-regulatory body for the profession marks the recognition of social work as equal to other professions in B.C.—and to our colleagues across the country—by according us full responsibility for regulating ourselves in the public interest. Being a college indicates that the profession has authority to elect members of the profession to its governing body (until now Board members have been appointed ...by the Cabinet). It also means that the legislative provisions are substantial enough to meet our responsibilities.

Because our mandate is to protect the public, balance is brought to the governing body through the appointment of public members to our Board by the Minister of Children and Family Development. The establishment of a professional self-regulatory scheme is built on the assumption that members of the profession are in the best position to choose their own leadership. Furthermore, these leaders will act in the broad public interest rather than only on behalf of the profession and of individual social workers.

Elsewhere in this newsletter there is a brief history of our collective efforts to improve the regulation of social work. Many social workers in our community have contributed to this effort over the years. Persistence is one of the strong attributes of successful social work practice. The work and effort of all our colleagues who participated in many meetings, did the research, wrote the drafts and final reports, submitted letters, spoke with government officials, and organized campaigns

certainly demonstrated this persistence—and it paid off. It has been my privilege to have worked with many wonderful people towards this goal.

Throughout this issue of the newsletter we have identified many of the key changes provided through the new Act. Few social workers are directly impacted on a daily basis by these changes, but, as Registrar, I see the benefits of an improved governance structure and complaints process. In addition, the Act gives us opportunities, such as potential new registration categories and our online registry, to strengthen the public profile of social work. The College's practices must be transparent, impartial, fair and objective—values consistent with our social work values. Our accountability as individual social workers and as a profession will be greater.

Few social workers are directly impacted on a daily basis by these changes, but, as Registrar, I see the benefits of an improved governance structure and complaints process.

The name of our newsletter, *College Conversation*, indicates greater involvement of registered social workers in the conversation of regulation. Please consider volunteering for one of the committees or putting your name forward for election to the Board next fall. Over time we will expand the standards of practice in specific areas and will continue to encourage input and feedback in this process.

It has been an exciting and stimulating (and sometimes frustrating) experience to achieve this milestone. This is but one step on the journey and I look forward to many more as we continue our work in protecting the public interest. 🌸

Spring 2009

Next issue of *College Conversation*.

July 2009

Notice of election for Board.

August-October 2009

Receipt of nominations; mail-out ballot distributed to all registrants.

October/November 2009

Ballots to be received by date to be announced.

November 2009

First Annual General Meeting of the B.C. College of Social Workers (in conjunction with BCASW conference).

Social Workers Act

Highlights of the new *Social Workers Act*

In addition to establishing the British Columbia College of Social Workers, the *Social Workers Act* generally improves the administrative efficiency of ongoing College functions, balances accountability with fairness to registered social workers, and improves the public's access to College information. You can find an electronic version of the new Act at http://www.leg.bc.ca/38th4th/3rd_read/gov35-3.htm

Specific improvements in the new Act include:

- For the first time, registered social workers will elect the social work members of the Board. These will constitute two-thirds of the Board while the remainder will be public members, appointed by the Minister of Children and Family Development.
- A new requirement for an online registry of all registered social workers.
- Greater accountability for registered social workers and employers to report serious misconduct.
- The College's complaint process is strengthened. There is now a more formal process for handling complaints, including the ability to compel evidence during an investigation. In addition, an investigation may continue even if a registrant resigns and the findings will be made public.
- Enhancing the registration function of the College by allowing for the establishment of a specific title and categories of social worker registration, such as a specific title for clinical registrants. If required, the College can increase the number of categories in the future.
- Making the appeal process for registration decisions less onerous and more accessible for applicants who have been denied, or had limits placed on, registration.
- The College's processes must be transparent, impartial, fair and objective. 🌸

The Registry and Registration – *What's Changing*

The British Columbia College of Social Workers came into formal existence on November 20, 2008 but the transition process will be ongoing for several more months. We intend to make it as smooth and problem-free as we can. First and foremost, all 2200 British Columbia social workers currently registered (as of November 2008) with the BRSW will maintain their same status with the College (new registrants, and we have several each week, will immediately be placed on the College's Registry). You will find that the new *Social Workers Act* authorizes several enhancements to the College's registration functions.

A new Online Registry

The College must maintain an Online Registry, posted on its website and completely accessible to the public, of all registered social workers. Anyone can easily confirm a social worker's registration and find the following information:

- the registrant's name
- the registrant's workplace contact information (subject to the registrant's consent)
- the current status of the registrant's certificate of registration.

In addition, if the College (or Board of Registration) has suspended or cancelled a registration, the Registry will contain a record of this action, including the reasons for the disciplinary action. The Act refers to misconduct that involves physical harm, sexual abuse or exploitation, significant emotional harm, or conduct in contravention of the College's standards of professional conduct or competence.

In certain cases, the Act permits the Board to withhold the reasons if revealing them would cause “significant hardship to a person who was harmed, abused or exploited by the registrant.” A registrant whom the Board has disciplined may, after five years have elapsed, apply to have this record removed from the Registry. If the Board determines such expungement to be in the public interest, it will remove the record.

Why the College is setting up an Online Registry

The main reason for having the Online Registry is to provide the public with accurate information about registrants. A member of the public will have the assurance that the social worker who is providing services is registered. Conversely, registered social workers know that a member of the public can have confidence in the services they provide.



The Online Registry will also act as a directory. British Columbians can search for registered social workers who are self-employed or look up a social worker’s business address or phone number, if he or she has agreed to this. If you’re in private practice, we believe this will prove to be a practical benefit.

Future improvements to the Online Registry

In the future it may be possible to include additional information such as specialist categories, if established by the College or if authorized under other legislation. 🌸

Reporting and Investigating Misconduct and Incompetence

Promoting Safe, Effective and Ethical Social Work

The new Act strengthens the College's complaints system

The College’s overriding interest is the protection and safety of the public and the quality of service they receive from registered social workers in British Columbia. Members of the public who have a question or a concern about a social worker can contact the College for guidance and, if they choose, file a formal complaint, which must be made in writing. The Registrar then forwards this complaint to the Inquiry Committee.

Increased powers of investigation

If the College accepts a complaint, it can proceed with a more effective investigation than previously. The *Social Workers Act* gives the College increased authority and powers to investigate complaints against registrants. Many investigations are conducted through written documents but inspectors appointed by the Inquiry Committee will also be able to access social workers’ premises and records when necessary. In very serious circumstances it may be possible to obtain a court order to access evidence.

In addition to investigating a complaint from the public or another registrant, Section 27 of the Act enables the Inquiry Committee to initiate an investigation of a registrant for any of the following reasons:

- “a contravention” of the Act or “failure to comply with a standard, limit or condition” imposed under the new Act
- “a conviction for an indictable offence”
- “professional misconduct” or “conduct unbecoming of a professional”
- “competence to practise social work”
- “incapacity or impairment” preventing a registrant from practising social work “with reasonable skill, competence and safety to the public.”

The registrant must cooperate with the Inquiry Committee and provide it with any information, documents or records considered necessary.

(Continues on next page)

Social Workers Act

(Continued from page 5)

Procedural fairness

The College's complaint process is quasi-legal. Principles of administrative fairness are applied at all times during the review in accord with the Act's mandate that the College engage in processes that are "transparent, impartial, fair and objective." In clearly outlining the process by which complaints are investigated and resolved, the Act strengthens procedural fairness for social workers throughout this process. The new Bylaws will further enhance fairness in the process by prescribing details of the process to be followed.

Once the Inquiry Committee has completed its investigation it may choose to:

- take no further action as the matter is trivial or vexatious or the social work conduct was satisfactory
- enter a complaint resolution agreement with the social worker to undertake education or supervision to improve practice, or in which a social worker agrees to terms or conditions
- issue a citation for a hearing held by the Discipline Committee.

The focus is on improving practice and only very serious matters are likely to go to a full hearing. Generally these agreements will not be made public, although any suspension of registration must be posted in the online registry.

Disciplinary proceedings

If the Discipline Committee holds a hearing, this process becomes public. Formal procedures are followed and the Committee must issue reasons for its decisions which could include:

- dismissing the matter
- determining that a social worker has not complied with the standards or has practised incompetently
- placing limits or conditions on a social worker's practice
- suspending or cancelling a social worker's registration, limiting his or her ability to practise.

A new provision is that the Discipline Committee may award costs to the respondent or to the College.

A registrant under investigation cannot avoid discipline by resigning

The College's authority regarding inquiry and disciplinary processes will now continue even when registered social workers resign their registration in the midst of a complaint investigation. Merely resigning registration will no longer lead to the avoidance of accountability as was the case prior to the new Act.

Notifying the public of the Discipline Committee's decisions

The Act requires the College to publish a record of disciplinary action taken against a social worker on the Online Registry, including reasons for the action. But, the reasons may be withheld to protect the privacy of a person "who was harmed, abused or exploited by the registrant."

For its part, the College is committed to fair and impartial investigations and discipline. The public and social workers benefit from having a profession that is respected for having strong ethical practices and a deep and abiding concern for the well-being of its clients.

DUTY TO REPORT

Your reporting responsibilities as a registered social worker

The *Social Workers Act* is very clear about the obligation of registered social workers to report suspected misconduct: "A registrant who has reason to believe that another registrant, in the course of practising social work, is causing or has caused physical or significant emotional harm to or is or has engaged in sexual abuse or sexual exploitation of a client, must promptly provide to the registrar a written and signed report on the matter." (Section 40) Employers have similar duties.

The new Act brings greater accountability for registered social workers. To follow the duty to report, you must submit a written and signed report to the Registrar. For example, if you are making a report because of information received from a client, you must make every effort to first advise the client of your legal duty to make a report. Only then should you submit a report. Also, if you don't know the identity of the social worker who has allegedly caused this harm or lack information to assist the Registrar in doing so, you are not required to file a report.

An employer's reporting responsibilities

Employers play an important role in helping the College fulfill its mandate of ensuring the ongoing competence of social workers in British Columbia. Section 39 of the *Social Workers Act* obliges employers to file reports with the Registrar when terminating, suspending or disciplining a registrant for "misconduct that is committed in the course of

practising social work and that involves physical or significant emotional harm to, or sexual abuse, or exploitation of a client . . ." The same obligation applies even if the employed registrant resigns before being terminated. In addition, a registrant who severs a partnership on similar grounds must make a report to the Registrar about the other partner's alleged misconduct. ❁

A New Appeal Process for Unsuccessful Applicants

The College's Registrar decides whether to approve a prospective registrant's application. If the applicant is turned down and decides to appeal the Registrar's decision, there is now a new procedure to follow. The new Act institutes an improved system which is less onerous and more accessible for a rejected applicant or one who has had limits placed on their registration.



Reasons for refusing registration

Applicants for registration in the College may be turned down on several grounds, including:

- They do not meet the academic requirements or have not demonstrated knowledge, skills and abilities substantially equivalent to those requirements.
- They may not have demonstrated satisfactory evidence of good character expected of a registrant.
- Their entitlement to practise may be limited, suspended or cancelled during or following an investigation, review or other proceeding in B.C. or another jurisdiction.
- Their entitlement to practise in B.C. or another jurisdiction has previously been voluntarily relinquished in order to prevent an investigation into their practice being undertaken or completed.

The Registrar must provide the reasons for denial in writing to the rejected applicant.

An improved review and appeal process for unsuccessful applicants

New provisions in the *Social Workers Act* enable an applicant who is denied registration to make a request in writing for a review of the Registrar's decision. The onus is on the applicant to make the request. The Registration Committee handles all reviews of a registration rejection through a written, electronic or oral hearing.

If, following that review, the applicant is still unsuccessful, he or she has an additional opportunity to appeal to the Registration Appeals Committee which will make one of the following written decisions:

- confirm the Registrar's decision to refuse the registration
- grant full registration
- grant registration with modifications such as time limitations, requiring the applicant to have additional training, education, or testing
- attach terms and conditions to the registration
- grant a different class of registration than that originally applied for. ❁

The **British Columbia** College of Social Workers

A New Name and a New Mandate

Under British Columbia's revised *Social Workers Act*, the British Columbia College of Social Workers is the governing body responsible for ensuring the safe, ethical and competent practice of social work in the province. Under the Act, the prime obligation of the College is to exercise its powers and responsibilities in the interest of the public.

Protecting your title

Under Section 18 of the Act, the College is responsible for ensuring that people who represent themselves as "Social Workers" or "Registered Social Workers" in B.C. are registered with the College, unless they are employed by a specific employer that is exempt from this requirement. Currently, the major exempt employers are the Ministry of Children and Family Development, Health Authorities, certain other public sector employers, and Aboriginal bands. The College now has the ability to award a new title "Registered Clinical Social Worker" (RCSW) to all those who meet the requirements of clinical registration, including successful completion of the exam.

The College's role

The new *Social Workers Act*, in particular Section 3, grants the College a wide range of responsibilities, the most significant being:

- to oversee the practice of social work across the province
- to determine the qualifications required for registration as a social worker

- to establish, monitor and enforce standards of practice to enhance the quality of practice
- to create and maintain a continuing competence program that promotes high practice standards among registrants
- to investigate complaints against registrants and to administer appropriate discipline, regarding issues of "professional misconduct, incompetence and incapacity"
- to set up and use registration, inquiry and discipline practices that are "transparent, objective, impartial and fair." ❁

We - and you - now have a corporate identity



British Columbia
College of Social Workers

The newly formed **British Columbia College of Social Workers** is a corporation consisting of the members of the Board and you, the registrants.



News about registration fees

A fee increase . . .

Beginning January 1st, 2009, annual registration fees will be \$255 for renewals. A fee increase covers the \$20 fee for the mandatory criminal record check which is now required every five years after initial registration.

The fees for 2009 are due on January 31, 2009. You are reminded that your registration will be cancelled on February 1 if you do not renew in time. You will be able to reinstate your registration from February 1 to April 30, 2009, but with an additional late payment fee.

. . .and a fee reduction if you are a recent graduate of a school of social work

If you apply to be registered as a social worker in your graduation year, the Board of Registration for Social Workers has recently reduced your annual registration fee to \$200 for your first and second years of practice. This change will take effect in January 2009. Note that you must pay the \$120 one-time application fee

(which includes payment for a criminal record check) in addition at the time you apply for registration.

Who must join the College of Social Workers?

Only those persons registered with the College may use the title, "Social Worker" or "Registered Social Worker", unless they work for an employer specifically exempted from this requirement. Currently, the major exempt employers are the Ministry of Children and Family Development, the Health Authorities, some other public sector employers, and Aboriginal bands.

The new Act provides greater flexibility in changing these exemptions in the future as circumstances evolve and if it is decided such action would be in the public interest. The Board will continue to support mandatory registration of all social workers but recognizes that the history of social work practice in British Columbia presents challenges to this goal. ❁

How to Participate in the Work of Your College

The Board

Get Involved! It's Your Board! Run for It!

A major change in the governance of the College, as compared to the Board of Registration, is that a majority (two-thirds) of the new Board's members will be comprised of, and elected by, registrants. This Board will enact Bylaws necessary for administering the College and governing the profession of social work in British Columbia.

As you know, in the past, the provincial government appointed all members of the Board of Registration for Social Workers. The present Board will continue to govern until it hands over its responsibilities next fall to the new College Board, which will have eight elected social-work members and four public members appointed by the Minister of Children and Family Development. The planned transition from BRSW to College ensures that there will be a seamless continuity of governance, which is crucial. There will be no disruption in service to social workers or the public.

As currently planned, the first election for the new Board members will take place in fall 2009 at the BCCSW's annual general meeting. We have not made a final decision about using a mail-in ballot for the election. The spring 2009 issue of *College Conversation* will have full details about the nomination and electoral procedures and timelines.

The Committees

Participate! It's Your Opportunity to Provide Guidance to the College

Under the previous governance structure, all the major statutory committees could only be comprised of Board members. Section 8 of the new *Social Workers Act* changes this. The College's Board will be able to appoint non-Board members to the various committees that the law requires us to have. However, only Board members will be able to sit on the Discipline Committee.

The legislation specifically names four committees (their responsibilities are outlined below) that the College must have. The Board can add others that it "determines are necessary or advisable." The College will cover such costs as travel expenses to meetings.

Our new website, www.bccollegeofsocialworkers.ca, has the information for any registrant who wants to join a committee. If you would like to help start the College on its new journey, please put your name

forward. If you have any questions, feel free to contact the office for more information at 604.737.4916.

Please submit your résumé and other details before January 23, 2009, indicating which committee you would like to join. We expect the new committees will start their work in spring 2009.

BCCSW Committees

Registration

This committee has five members, some of whom may also be on the Board. It is responsible for reviewing applications for registration that the Registrar has not accepted. It may also recommend social work education programs for approval by the Board as meeting the qualifications for registration. It also puts forward policy recommendations on registration matters.

Registration Appeals

A second level of appeal for failed registration applicants is available through this committee. It will also determine if terms and conditions set for certain registrants are fair and equitable. This committee will have three to five members.

Inquiry

This committee is responsible for investigating complaints about the social work practice of registrants. It has a range of options for resolving issues, including negotiating agreements with social workers for educational goals. There will be two non-Board members on this important committee.

Discipline

This is the sole committee on which only Board members can sit. It conducts hearings into disciplinary matters involving registrants.

Quality Assurance

This committee reviews standards of practice and may establish a program to promote high standards of practice among social workers. It will have six members.

Ad-Hoc Committees

In addition to the above committees which are mandated by the *Social Workers Act*, the Board may, from time to time, establish other committees to work on other College issues and policies. Currently there are two such committees—**Health Care Standards** and **Adult Guardianship**. 

Clinical Registration Update



New regulation brings new title

The Social Work Regulation that came into effect on November 20, 2008 provides for a new title, Registered Clinical Social Worker (RCSW), that applies to all registered in the clinical class. When the College's Bylaws come into effect in spring 2009, there will be a provision allowing for an expanded scope of practice to include diagnosing mental conditions.

Congratulations!

We are pleased to announce that the following social workers are now approved for clinical registration, making a total of 105 RCSWs.

Sunita Ashok

Barbara Baker

Miriam Balen

Barbara Baumgartner

Julie Carlson

John Cook

Margaret Demello

Orlando Frizado

Annemarie Gockel

David Guthrie

Judith Hayes

Deborah Headley

Constance Kaweesi

Szu Chi Lee

Mary Leslie

Terri-Lee Seeley

Glen Schmidt

Wayne Shoblom

Lindsay Stewart

Carolyn Tanner

Deborah Thom

Professional Opportunity

Examination Writers Sought

The Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB), which develops and maintains the social work licensing exams, is seeking examination question writers for training in 2009. Writers are paid US\$1,000 for attending a weekend training and submitting 30 acceptable questions.

Writers should have a degree in social work, current social work registration, and the willingness to produce 30 questions that are accepted by an editor over six to eight months. They must also be available for training in Virginia on June 26-28, 2009. Travel, meals and lodging expenses for the training are paid by ASWB.

Writers will be chosen for demographic balance as well as credentials and expertise. Social workers with all levels of social work education, registration, and experience are needed. Applicants will be asked to complete a short exercise via mail or e-mail to indicate probable success in writing questions.

To apply, send a letter of interest and a résumé by December 31, 2008, to:

Exam Writers, **ASWB**, 400 South Ridge Parkway, Suite B, Culpeper, VA 22701.

For more information, contact Lavina Harless, lharless@aswb.org

Letters of interest and résumés may also be sent by e-mail to that address.

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•SEARCH

 **ASWB**

ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORK BOARDS

ANNOUNCEMENTS Winter / 2008 **• SOCIAL WORK LICENSING EXAMS • SOCIAL WORK LICENSING**

Do We Have Your Current E-mail Address?

We would like to have your e-mail address. Occasionally we use our e-mail list to provide or solicit information from registrants and to send reminders of relevant information. If we don't have your correct e-mail address, you don't receive our messages. We treat your e-mail address in the same way as your contact particulars in the registry: if you want it kept confidential, we will honour your wish. We are bound by British Columbia's privacy laws and we do not give out the e-mail list to third parties.

Address Changes – Let Us Know!

As a British Columbia College of Social Workers registrant, you are required to advise the College of any change of practice or residential address and other contact information. Please ensure your contact information is accurate and current for the following reasons:

- The College is required under the *Social Workers Act* to maintain an Online Registry that makes information on the status of your registration available to the public. With consent, this includes your business name and address.
- Notwithstanding the Online Registry, you must let the College know your current place of social work practice so we can contact you if needed. *If you have several employment locations, including self-employment, you must provide all of them to the College.*

There are several easy ways to update your registrant file. Simply provide the information in writing via mail, fax, or e-mail message to the College at info@bccsw.ca or by telephone at 604.737.4916.

Criminal Record Check Reminder

A recent amendment to the *Criminal Records Review Act* requires that

criminal record rechecks be made every five years. The College will shortly be contacting registrants whose surnames begin with the letters F-J. You will be asked to sign a form authorizing a Criminal Record Check when your criminal record recheck is due. The Ministry's Criminal Record Review Program charges \$20 for each check. Remember: this cost is included in your registration fee.

Regional Information Sessions Coming in the Spring

The College of Social Workers will be holding meetings in several regions of British Columbia with registered social workers and social work agencies to discuss the new role and direction of the College as well as other changes resulting from the *Social Workers Act*. High on the agenda for the meetings will be information about the election for social work members for the College's Board.

These meetings will take place in March, April and May, 2009. For more information about dates, locations, etc., check our website, www.bccollegeofsocialworkers.ca, from time to time. We will also be sending out more information early next year.

Board News

Brigitte Wagner-Yates has stepped down from the Board after serving for three years. She initiated the Health Care Standards Subcommittee, serving as its first Chair. She was also a member of the Quality Assurance Committee and, as a member of the Legislative Review Committee, an active contributor to the drafting of the new Bylaws. We thank her for her contribution to the work of the BRSW and the establishment of the College.

Susan Hogman has been appointed as a new social worker member of the Board. She has extensive experience in health care and is currently the

Director of Social Work and Adult Services at the BC Centre for Ability. Formerly she was the Manager of Social Work at Surrey Memorial Hospital. She continues to maintain a private practice as well as active involvement in the Social Workers in Health Care Society of BC.

New Bylaws

A draft of the College's new Bylaws is posted on our website at www.bccsw.ca. We encourage you to review them and send any comments or suggestions to the Board office at info@bccsw.ca. The Bylaws will come into force at the end of February.

College Calendar

Upcoming Board Meetings

Friday, February 13, 2009 (time tba)

Friday, April 17, 2009 (time tba)

Friday, June 19th, 2009 (time tba)

Registrants are welcome to attend all Board meetings which are held outside our offices. To find out the time and location of meetings, please e-mail the College at info@bccsw.ca if you plan to attend or telephone us at 604.737.4916.

Employment Opportunity

There is an opportunity for a Registered Social Worker interested in professional and regulatory issues to work with the College of Social Work on practice issues. This position will take on responsibilities in the development of standards of practice and quality assurance. This will involve working with committees, undertaking research, and writing reports and standards. It may include preparing educational sessions and addressing practice concerns of registered social workers. This work may be done on a contract basis and there is flexibility in the hours.

Qualifications Registered Social Worker, Master of Social Work degree, experience in direct practice and education desirable. Please send letter of interest and current résumé to the Registrar at the College office.

Contacting the College

Please note that our e-mail address and website have changed along with our name. The previous e-mail addresses will still reach us for a few months but we would appreciate it if you would make the change in

your directory as soon as possible. Visitors to the BRSW website will also be forwarded to the new website for the time being. Our general e-mail address is now info@bccsw.ca. Our new website is www.bccollegeofsocialworkers.ca

A Brief History of Social Work Regulation in B.C.,

The first *Social Workers Act* in British Columbia came into force in 1969, creating the Board of Registration for Social Workers. It protected the public by registering social workers who met the required standards and allowed them to tell their clients and employers that they were registered social workers. The Board had the ability to cancel or suspend registration if a person was found to be guilty of misconduct or incompetence.

A series of requests in the 1970s culminated in a 1980 report proposing the creation of a *Social Service Practitioners Act*, which would have established a class of registration for social service workers as well as strengthened their regulation.

Over the years there were amendments to address operational issues and, around 1990, the BRSW was given control of the title "social worker" with exemptions for public sector employers and Aboriginal bands.

Starting in 1993 the BC Association of Social Workers and members of the Board of Registration prepared the

Report of the Task Force on Regulation of the Professions, the first of two reports that ultimately recommended regulating social work under the *Health Professions Act*.

In 1997 another joint report, *Establishing a College of Social Workers under the Health Professions Act*, submitted to the newly established Ministry of Children and Families, led to more successful negotiations with the government.

The Ministry set up its own task force (including social workers and other related professions) which issued the *Report of the Working Group on Regulation of Social Service Professions* in 1999.

In recent years the Board of Registration sent letters, made submissions and met with Ministers and government officials in search of improved legislation. In 2005 the Ministry of Children and Family Development advised that they would put forward a request for legislation to amend the statute and, three years later, sponsored the new *Social Workers Act*.

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Practice Issues

**Election Process for the Next Board
Incapability Assessments Under Adult
Guardianship Act**

Board

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