

# College Conversation

The Newsletter of the British Columbia College of Social Workers

## On Becoming a College

Susan Irwin, RSW, Registrar

The British Columbia College of Social Workers will be holding its first election of social workers to the profession's regulatory body in November. Although we have had a regulatory board for forty years, the members of the Board of Registration were always appointed by the government. Now, for the first time, Registered Social Workers will have the opportunity to elect their own leaders.

This is a hallmark of professional self-regulation and one that is valued by all professions. The members of this governing body will determine acceptable standards of practice for the profession of social work and determine when those standards have been breached. This is a significant responsibility, one that requires strong leadership to meet the inevitable challenges that social workers and their profession will face.

This is our opportunity to select those who will provide this leadership. Generally, members of governing bodies are senior practitioners who are familiar with the challenges and complexities of practice. They bring experience and wisdom to decision-making.

One of the functions of the College is to investigate complaints about Registered Social Workers. A social worker who is undergoing such an investigation must have confidence in the members of the Inquiry and Discipline committees, predominantly comprised of Board members. Those investigating and considering the complaint do so with knowledge that comes from their own practices and with respect and understanding for the many variables and nuances that influence any social worker's decisions.

*(Continues on page 2)*

**2009 call for nominations for election to the board of the British Columbia College of Social Workers**

*See page 2 for details*

### We're Holding Community Meetings PLEASE COME!

We want to meet you, hear your opinions about the College, let you know about the forthcoming election for the BCCSW Board and perhaps encourage you to be a candidate. Mark one of these dates in your calendar and bring a colleague.

**Victoria: Wednesday, April 15****Kelowna: Wednesday, May 27****Prince George: Thursday, June 4**

Details of times and locations are on page 12 (back cover).

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# On Becoming a College

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Electing the eight social work members of the Board is the greatest input that registrants have in governing the profession. Unlike members of non-profit societies or similar organizations, registrants are not able to vote on other matters such as fees, finances, policies, or standards. Those decisions are left to the Board since members of professional regulatory bodies must act primarily in the public interest rather than representing members' interests. This is consistent with most current legislation regulating professions. In fact, Board members must take an oath that they will act in the public interest.

To establish a strong Board, it is important that there are strong candidates for office. There is strength in diversity; the Board will benefit from having members from different cultural backgrounds, various regions of the province, and different fields of practice. Elsewhere in this newsletter there is more information about eligibility and responsibilities for Board members. Do consider putting your name forward for election or nominating a colleague to provide this leadership. This is a wonderful opportunity to contribute to our profession. 🌸

## Notice of Election



### 2009 call for nominations for election to the Board of the British Columbia College of Social Workers

In November 2008, the BC College of Social Workers, by authority of the *Social Workers Act*, assumed the functions of the former Board of Registration for Social Workers. Registered Social Workers, as a group of professionals, now have the authority and responsibility for self-governance. The transition Board is seeking nominations for Registered Social Workers in good standing to stand for election to the first Board of the new College with the term of office commencing January 1, 2010. The election will be held on Thursday, November 5, 2009, the date selected by the Minister of Children and Family Development.

For more details on election process, go to page 9.



## Nominations

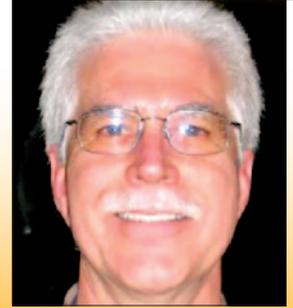
There are eight Board positions open for nominations. Any registrant may nominate a maximum of two registrants. Nominees must agree to stand for election.

### Deadlines

- 1. Nomination Form and Nominee's Letter of Consent**  
Due: 4 p.m., Friday, September 4, 2009
- 2. Nominee's Biographical Information and Photograph**  
Due: 4 p.m., Monday, September 14, 2009
- 3. Distribution of Ballots**  
Before October 6, 2009
- 4. Receipt of Completed Ballots**  
Due: 4.00 p.m., Wednesday, October 21, 2009
- 5. Election**  
Thursday, November 5, 2009

# From the Chair

**Jim Campbell, RCSW, Chair**



I believe everyone has heard about the new *Social Workers Act* being passed and proclaimed in 2008, which means a self-regulatory College of Social Workers has been created in British Columbia. Becoming a College means there will be elections for social workers to be on the Board later this year. 2009 will be the year of actualizing the BC College of Social Workers, establishing the election process and committees, and then having an AGM that coincides with the BCASW's annual fall conference.

Currently there are a total of twelve Board members—ten professional and two public—all appointed by the Government of British Columbia. The new Board will have the same number but four will be public representatives appointed by the Government and the remaining eight elected social workers. Planning is starting because the election will occur this fall with the results to be announced at our first Annual General Meeting in November 2009. If you are interested in running to be a member of the Board, or serving on a committee, please contact the Registrar, Susan Irwin, to learn about the requirements and process.

In addition to running for election to the Board, there are opportunities for Registered Social Workers to be on

Board committees. This will improve the organization's effectiveness by expanding involvement in regulatory committees to include registrants who are not Board members. With increased accountability, membership on these committees requires a lot of professional responsibility. As well, the legislative changes improve the principles of administrative fairness by defining complaint and review processes.

The new Act also requires an on-line registry of all registered social workers. This has occurred, so you may wish to look for yourself or colleagues on the BCCSW web site ([www.bccollegeofsocialworkers.ca](http://www.bccollegeofsocialworkers.ca)). ❁

## Life on the Board: A Personal Narrative

**Kathryn McCannell, RCSW**



I was appointed to the Board in 2007 and, besides the Board itself, serve on two very different Committees—the Inquiry Committee, which investigates complaints from the public, and the Promotions Committee, which has lighter responsibilities such as deciding on a new logo for the College and organizing social events. It has been a privilege to work with other committed social workers, and the Board's public representatives, to strengthen the profession.

My main interest is in improving the complaint process for the benefit of the public and developing practice directives to assist social workers. Sitting on the Inquiry Committee, I have found it humbling to realize the complexity and breadth of social work practice in the province. I have been involved in twelve cases, some of which have been quite simple while others have involved reading—and giving detailed consideration to—hundreds of pages of background material.

Board meetings are held in Vancouver in the delightful setting of Granville Island. Some Board and Committee business is dealt with by e-mail or by teleconferencing, which saves making a trip to Vancouver from Victoria where I live. Board membership has involved a considerable time commitment for a social worker like myself who is in private practice—I have spent over 20 days on Board business in the past year.

However, participating in the work of the Board has afforded me excellent training opportunities. I attended a course on administrative justice, which was very valuable, and a workshop in Chicago designed specifically for members of social work regulatory boards. This training enabled me to better understand the responsibilities and functions of our Board and the Inquiry Committee.

Board members come from all parts of the province but are united in a commitment to protecting the public, strengthening the profession, and encouraging high standards of practice. I have found my time on the Board to be enjoyable, challenging and interesting. I encourage others to consider running in our first election!

***Kathryn McCannell, RCSW, has practised social work for 32 years in Manitoba and British Columbia. She has not decided if she will run for election to the College's first Board.*** ❁



# Do Your Marketing Materials Comply with the College's Bylaws and Standards of Practice?

Sheila Begg, RSW, Deputy Registrar

From time to time Registered Social Workers may find it useful to review the College's Standards of Practice and requirements as set out in our Bylaws. This will assist you in making sure your practice is in compliance with the College's public-interest mandate and that all your routines and methodologies are likewise in accord. One area in particular that you may want to examine is how you advertise your practice.

The intention of advertising by Registered Social Workers should simply be to inform and educate the public about their services. They may advertise through public statements, announcements, advertising media and promotional activities. But advertising must not be false or misleading. In addition, it must not contravene any of the other seven directives in Section 7.1 of Principle VII in the Standards of Practice. If you are advertising your services, do review that Principle as well as the provisions of Section 69 of the College's Bylaws.

In recent months, the College has received complaints that a number of social workers' websites contain violations of its Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics. Providing incorrect information is the leading infraction. For example, one website belonging to a long-standing registrant erroneously stated that a master's degree in social work is the minimum requirement for registration. In fact, the Bylaws specifically state that a Bachelor of Social Work is the minimum academic requirement.

Another erroneous statement implied that a certain professional organization was a regulatory body when in fact that organization sells voluntary memberships and is not regulated by any statute (other than being registered under the *Societies Act*). Another stated that social workers are registered with the BC College of Social Workers long before we changed our name from the Board of Registration for Social Workers.

Fortunately, reality eventually proved this website correct. However, if you want to come across as well educated, experienced and professionally ethical, you should provide accurate and up-to-date information. When in doubt call the College to check or ask us to review your material.

The second most frequent infraction is printing testimonials or endorsements about the services provided. The Board has always discouraged this form of advertising as it is usually impossible for prospective

clients or members of the public to verify them. Even if the source is named, one person's problems and experiences will be very different from another's. A testimonial could give false hope to the point of misleading a prospective client into seeking a "magical cure" for their problem.

To avoid difficulties with your advertising, here are some tips to follow:

*The intention of advertising by Registered Social Workers should simply be to inform and educate the public about their services.*

- Carefully read Section 69 of the Bylaws and Principle VII of the Standards, both of which are posted at [www.bccollegeofsocialworkers.ca](http://www.bccollegeofsocialworkers.ca)
- If you wish to inform the public about the BC College of Social Workers (or any other organization or service), set up a link to our website. This will ensure you are providing correct and up-to-date information, especially when the College changes its policies and procedures.
- If you are distributing brochures about services provided by another organization, ask to be on their mailing list for changes and/or new versions of their advertising. Giving out misleading information could be embarrassing and damaging for your own practice.
- Delete all testimonials and endorsements immediately to comply with the College's Standards of Practice.
- Avoid using the title "specialist" in your advertising or when referring to your practice in the media. (Section 69 [6] of the College's Bylaws)
- Do not compare your services to those of other professionals.
- Check with the College before displaying or representing additional credentials after your name. Your BSW or MSW has been approved but using Ph.D. or other credentials requires approval by the College. (Standard 7.1[h])
- Always identify yourself as a Registered Social Worker in any advertising. 

# Inquiry Committee Reports

From time to time, the BCCSW issues short reports on the work of its Committees in resolving complaints about the practice of social work. These summaries serve to demonstrate the work of the College as well as the standards expected of Registered Social Workers. The names and identifying information of social workers who have been the subject of complaints are kept confidential, unless the matter goes to a full disciplinary hearing.

**1** A client complained about counselling services that were provided by a social worker but funded by a third party. He alleged that sessions were cut short and that the techniques used were unhelpful; in addition, he complained that the social worker would not refer him to a more convenient resource. After an investigation, the Inquiry Committee concluded that there were several practice issues requiring attention. These included: improved record-keeping; additional training on the use of specific intervention models; and review of standards regarding referral and closing of files.

**Outcome** The social worker agreed to consult with an approved social worker to review practice issues over the course of a year.

**2** A client complained that a Registered Social Worker breached the Standards regarding confidentiality by requesting a medical report from the client's physician. She denied consenting to the provision of this report. Upon investigation, the Inquiry Committee determined that the client had signed a release form and had not indicated to the social worker that she was withholding consent.

**Outcome** The Committee took no further action as there was no error or misconduct on the part of the social worker.

**3** Divorced parents sought help from a social worker in resolving custody and access disputes involving their children. One parent complained that the social worker had breached several of the College's Standards of Practice. After a thorough investigation, the Inquiry Committee concluded that there was no basis for some of the allegations, but identified concerns about the social worker's practice regarding record-keeping, confidentiality, contracting with clients, and preparing assessments.

**Outcome** The social worker agreed to consult with an experienced social worker approved by the Committee to review these practice issues. 

## Questions of Professional Practice

I work with patients in a care facility. Sometimes a patient will ask me to witness their signature on a document. Is this OK or against our standards?

It is understandable that a client would look to their social worker for assistance in completing or witnessing documents. The client has built a trusting relationship with the social worker who knows them well. Documents such as Representation Agreements often address personal issues the client has discussed with the social worker.

*If you, as a social worker, have assisted your client in completing such forms in any way, then you should not also witness your client's signature.*

However, a social worker needs to reflect upon whether there is a potential conflict of interest in this process. If you, as a social worker, have assisted your client in completing such forms in any way, then you should not also witness your client's signature. You may act as a witness if you have not had any role in preparing or completing the documents or if you will not benefit in any way. Generally it is better if social workers refrain from witnessing signatures on behalf of clients. 

# The election for BCCSW's First Board

## The Board of the British Columbia College of Social Workers: **Duties and Responsibilities**

The *Social Workers Act* gives the BC College of Social Workers the authority to register and regulate social workers, establish standards for social work practice and, when necessary, attend to matters involving professional misconduct, incompetence and incapacity. Through BCCSW, Registered Social Workers have similar authority and responsibility for self-governance as other professionals. The College's registrants govern themselves by serving on the Board, serving as members of standing or ad hoc committees, providing input into standards development, and participating in other volunteer activities that relate to the College's mandate.

The Board is the College's policy-making and governing body. Its main responsibility is to assist registrants in carrying out their own mandate of public protection and, in cooperation with them, maintain the public's trust in the social work profession. To that end, the public interest is the primary factor in the Board's discussions and decisions: registrants elected to the BCCSW Board must acknowledge that imperative.

## Who's Eligible to **Sit on the Board**

If you are a Registered Social Worker in the BCCSW's full or clinical classes, you are eligible to run for election to the Board so long as you:

- are currently registered and in good standing with the BCCSW
- have been actively engaged in the practice of social work for at least one of the last five years (i.e. 2004 – 2008 inclusive)
- have at least three years of experience in the practice of social work
- have paid all fees or other moneys that you owe to the College
- have not been the subject of a finding of professional misconduct, incompetence or incapacity in the two years preceding the election date
- have not had your registration revoked or suspended in the last two years for any reason other than the non-payment of fees
- do not have any terms, conditions, or limitations on your registration as a result of a complaint. ❁

(BCCSW Bylaws, Section 4)



*Celebrating the establishment of the BCCSW on November 20, 2008 were, left to right, Mark Sieben, Assistant Deputy Minister, Ministry of Children and Family Development; Jim Campbell, Kathryn McCannell, Brad Watson (current and former Board members); Jerry Ziskrout (legal counsel) and Bruce Hallsor (Board member)*



# Thinking of Running for Election to the Board? You Should Know What to Expect

In November 2009, for the first time, eight social workers will be elected to the Board by the full membership while four public members will be appointed by the Minister. This privilege of self-regulation provides an opportunity for all Registered Social Workers to be thoughtful and careful in selecting the leaders they want to govern themselves. Those wishing to provide this leadership, and those considering nominating other registrants as candidates, should be aware of and carefully consider the expectations that come with election to the Board.

For the benefit of all registrants, but particularly those considering running for election to the Board, the following (taken from the *Social Workers Act* and the College's Policy Manual) summarizes a Board member's duties and obligations. They may change as the College adjusts and adapts to the requirements of registrants, the public and the government. Unless otherwise denoted, quoted words and phrases come from the Policy Manual.

## What are the legal duties of a Board member?

The *Social Workers Act* precisely states that "the board must govern, control and administer the affairs of the college in accordance with this Act." In addition, the Board has the right to "establish standards, limits or conditions for the practice of social work by registrants." Individual Board members have a legal duty to "act honestly and in good faith in the best interests" of the College. In addition they should "exercise the care, diligence, and skill of a reasonably informed person" and be prepared to "approach all matters with an open mind." Board members must always act to serve and protect the public and are required to take an oath to do so.

## Does the College's Board have a code of conduct?

Yes. All Board members should "conduct themselves in ways that reflect favourably" on the integrity of the Board, the College and the social work profession. They should not be members of another organization "whose aims, objectives, and membership criteria are

*First and foremost, Board members should act in ways that "ensure the full protection of the public and the efficient and effective achievement" of the College's mandate.*

inconsistent and/or in conflict" with those of the College. They will "act with respect, fairness, honesty, inclusiveness, and confidentiality in all relationships" involving people both within and outside the College.

## What are the expectations for Board members?

First and foremost, Board members should act in ways that "ensure the full protection of the public and the efficient and effective achievement" of the College's mandate. They must be conversant with the *Social Workers Act* and its related Rules. Board members are expected to attend all Board

meetings (for which they should be well prepared), to serve on Board committees and task forces, and to participate in hearing panels.

In addition, they are responsible for ensuring that Board decisions are clear, written, and acted upon. They need to be well informed about the College's "mandate and work, and the issues within regulatory practices of the social work profession" as well as "the quasi-judicial roles and responsibilities of the Board, certain Board committees, and hearing panels." ❁

# Election Code of Conduct for BCCSW Board Nominees

## Conflict of Interest

- BCCSW Board nominees must not place themselves in any position in which there is a conflict of interest—actual, potential or perceived—between their BCCSW responsibilities and their personal interests or obligations to themselves or others.
- The test for determining if a conflict of interest exists is based on whether it will affect, or may appear to affect or influence, any BCCSW decision or activity in an improper way.
- A conflict is present when an individual has an outside interest that can be reasonably expected to influence how he or she might conduct BCCSW business. ***A conflict of interest exists whether or not the individual is actually swayed by the competing interest.***

## Campaigning for the BCCSW Board

Campaigning includes the distribution of nominees' election material, advertising, or making comments through any media channels designed to reach BCCSW registrants and/or members of the public. BCCSW Board nominees must adhere to the campaign policies set out below.

While campaigning, BCCSW Board nominees may not:

- use BCCSW letterhead or the BCCSW corporate logo on their campaign materials
- use the letterhead or logo of an employer on their campaign materials
- request or use a campaign endorsement from an employer
- solicit campaign donations or accept campaign funds from any organization, including social work professional practice groups.

Nominees must receive permission from an employer before campaigning at a worksite.

## Campaign Expenses

All campaign expenses are the responsibility of an individual Board nominee. They may **not exceed \$2,500** per nominee. All Board nominees will have to submit a report of their campaign expenses, including donations, by 4.00 p.m. on October 28, 2009 (five business days prior to the election date).

## Campaign Donations

Board nominees must not solicit campaign donations or accept **campaign funds from any organization, including social work professional practice groups.**

## Campaign Conduct

Board nominees, and/or BCCSW registrants campaigning on behalf of one Board nominee, may not indicate or imply that other nominees are undeserving of the support of BCCSW registrants. Statements to the media must conform to BCCSW Board policies **and receive prior approval from the BCCSW.**

## Campaign Material

Nominees may, if they wish, submit a **biographical statement, of no more than 180 words**, that the College will post on its website. They may also submit a head-and-shoulders photograph (3x4 or 5x7 inches on paper or up to one megabyte in digital format) to accompany the statement.

## Violation of the Code of Conduct

If a BCCSW registrant believes that a nominee is acting in violation of the Election Code of Conduct, he or she should contact the BCCSW's Registrar who will speak directly to the nominee involved.

If the nominee in question fails to offer a satisfactory explanation for his or her behaviour or fails to correct it, or if the matter cannot otherwise be resolved, the Registrar will present the facts to the BCCSW Board for consideration. The Board will then take such action as it decides to be appropriate. 

# How You Will Elect the College's First Board

## The Process: Step by Step

**1 Notice of Election** By law, this must be sent out before August 7, 2009 (90 days before the election). Because this is our first election, we are giving ourselves and our registrants plenty of time to think about and prepare for it so the College is circulating the notice in April as part of this newsletter. (The notice is on page 2.)

**2 Distribution of Nomination and Consent Forms** These will be available for downloading on the BCCSW website ([www.bccollegeofsocialworkers.ca](http://www.bccollegeofsocialworkers.ca)) in June. Or you can telephone the office at 604.737.4916 and we'll mail them to you. A copy of the "Election Code of Conduct for BCCSW Board Nominees" will also be available for downloading at the same time.

**3 Return of Signed Nomination and Consent Forms** A Registered Social Worker in good standing must sign the nomination form and the nominee must sign the Consent Form to indicate that he or she is willing to run for election. **The BCCSW office must receive these signed forms before 4.00 p.m. on Friday, September 4, 2009.** We advise all nominators and candidates to send in their forms as early as possible so that the College can ensure that candidates meet all eligibility requirements. The forms and letters should be addressed to:

**The Registrar**  
**British Columbia College of Social Workers**  
302 – 1765 West 8th., Avenue,  
Vancouver, BC, V6J 5C6.

All forms and letters received by the deadline will be acknowledged with a note of receipt. (See "Election Eligibility" on page 6.)

**4 Candidate's Biography and Photograph** So that candidates may make themselves known to the College's membership, they may prepare biographies (**no longer than 180 words**) and photographs (head-and-shoulders only and, if digital, not to exceed one megabyte). These may be sent by e-mail to [info@bccsw.ca](mailto:info@bccsw.ca) or by regular mail. The College office must receive them on or before Friday, September 14, 2009 for posting on the BCCSW website.

**5 Distribution of Ballots** The College will mail out ballots and the candidates' information before Tuesday, October 6, 2009. If you have not received

this package by Wednesday, October 14, contact the College immediately so we can express one to you.

**6 Receipt of Completed Ballots** The College must receive all completed ballots by 4.00 p.m. on Wednesday, October 21, 2009. If sending by first-class mail, be sure to allow enough days for the ballot to arrive in time.

**7 Nominees' Expense Reports** Nominees may spend up to \$2,500 on campaign expenses (See "Election Code of Conduct" on page 8 for more details) and submit a report of their expenditures. The College must receive nominees' campaign expense reports by 4.00 p.m. on Wednesday, October 28, 2009.

**8 Counting of Ballots** The unopened ballots will be secured until Thursday, November 5, 2009, when they will be counted. Independent scrutiny of the counting will ensure that the results are fair and valid. The completed ballots will be retained to allow for appeals, after which they will be destroyed.

**9 Announcement of Election Results** The election result will be announced at the College's First Annual General Meeting on Saturday, November 7, 2009 and the successful candidates introduced to all registrants.

## Post-election Procedures

- After the election, the Registrar certifies each member who has been elected to the Board.
- Any College registrant in good standing may, within 30 days of the announcement of the election results, question the certificate of election by petitioning the Supreme Court of British Columbia.
- Before taking office, a person elected or appointed to the Board of the British Columbia College of Social Workers must take the prescribed oath of office.

## Term of Office

- The term of office for the new Board will begin on January 1, 2010.
- The four candidates receiving the most votes will serve on the Board for two years, until December 31, 2011.
- The other four candidates will serve for one year, until December 31, 2010.
- A Board member may serve a maximum of three consecutive terms. 

## Practice Analysis Survey

As a means of ensuring that the exams used for social work registration or licensing purposes remain valid and reliable, the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) will conduct a continent-wide practice analysis of the profession in 2009. British Columbia and all the other provinces' social work regulators will participate in this survey, giving us a unique opportunity to analyze Canadian social work practice.

In May, the College will contact approximately 300 Registered Social Workers in BC to ask them to complete this survey, which will be on-line and take about one hour to complete. The survey consists of statements of tasks used in practice and asks respondents to identify how important each task is in their current job. The report from the last practice analysis (conducted in 2003) is available at [www.aswb.org](http://www.aswb.org) for those who are interested.

The Practice Analysis Task Force, comprised of social work practitioners and educators, has provided expertise in identifying how social work is practiced in the field. Their report is the basis for the survey questions. Chi Ying Wong, a BCCSW Board member, sits on this Task Force with social workers from several other provinces so there is a significant Canadian contribution to this process.

As this survey is being conducted by a US-based psychometric company, we have thoroughly reviewed the applicable privacy laws. Each social worker will be asked to give written consent to the College before participating in the survey. The sampling will be conducted directly through our office.

The only personal information collected will be the respondent's name provided after completing the survey. The reason for including names is to track participation to ensure the sampling is valid. There will be a contract between BCCSW and the testing company that complies with BC's privacy laws.

The College strongly encourages you to participate if you are selected for the survey. It will be an opportunity for you to reflect on your practice and, at the same time, make a valuable contribution to our profession. 

## News about Examinations

### New Registration Examination Requirement Forthcoming

The Board of the BC College of Social Workers decided at its February 2009 meeting that all applicants for registration will, starting in a few years' time, have to successfully complete an examination as part of the registration requirements. The purpose of this is to assure the public that all Registered Social Workers have demonstrated knowledge of basic entry-to-practice skills, regardless of their educational program.

Accredited social work education programs vary greatly in content and take broad approaches so the regulatory body must ensure that each practitioner has met minimum standards. This will be consistent with the requirement in the *Social Workers Act* that all registration procedures must be transparent, objective, impartial and fair. Exams developed by the Association of Social Work Boards have been demonstrated to be a reliable and valid measure of basic social work skills. Details about the exams are available at [www.aswb.org](http://www.aswb.org)

No date has been set for establishing this examination requirement but it is likely it will be two years or more before the College implements it. Many details have yet to be worked out, especially regarding scheduling and location of exams. Of course, this requirement will

not be retroactive: no one registered before this is put into effect will be required to take an exam for basic (full) registration.

Several other provinces have also decided to require an exam for registration and others are discussing this. There are expectations that each profession have a national standard for entry and this requirement will move us in that direction.

### Clinical Exam

The next clinical exam in Metro Vancouver is scheduled for 1:00 p.m. on Friday, November 6, 2009. The exam will be held at BCIT in Burnaby. The deadline to register with the Association of Social Work Boards for this sitting is **12 noon on Friday, October 2, 2009**. You must first be approved by the BCCSW. Go to the ASWB website for more details—[www.aswb.org](http://www.aswb.org)

Applicants for clinical registration should ensure that they submit all their required documents to the BC College of Social Workers on or before Friday, September 18, 2009 to allow sufficient time for the College to review them and authorize candidates to write the exam. For more details, phone the College at **(604) 737-4916** or e-mail us at [info@bccsw.ca](mailto:info@bccsw.ca) 

# BCCSW at a glance

## Criminal Record Checks

Thank you to everyone who submitted their authorization for a criminal record check by the deadline of December 31, 2008. As you are aware, the provincial government has established a new requirement that every member of a professional regulatory body such as BCCSW, as well as anyone who works with children, must undergo a recheck of their criminal record every five years.

The BCCSW was required to have all RSWs whose last name begins with letters A through E undergo this review in 2008. The deadline for the next group will be December 31, 2009, but we intend to do this earlier in the year to avoid the inevitable crunch at year's end.

While most people responded to the first request in September 2008, we had to remind a significant number by e-mail and then follow up with a second letter. By the end of the year, there were three people who had still not responded or advised us they planned to discontinue their registration. Unfortunately, in order for the College to comply with the law, we had to open complaint files on these three registrants. Not only was this necessary under the *Criminal Records Review Act* but failure to respond to this request was contrary to the College's Bylaws.

We ask that all those required to submit the authorization this year, do so early. If you do not plan to meet this requirement, advise us well before the deadline so we can avoid launching a complaint.

Note that the College's Bylaws define "misconduct" in Section 61 (a) (ii) as contravening, while engaged in the practice of social work, an act or regulation or rule made under any act designed to protect the health of the public, and in (xiv) as failure to reply within 30 days to any written request for information from the board or its members, officers and employees.

## Psychotherapist Designation

Previously we reported on a BC Supreme Court case in which the judge determined that a Registered Social Worker, who is also a clinical counsellor, could not represent himself as a psychotherapist. This resulted from the interpretation of the Psychologists Regulation under the *Health Professions Act*, which allowed the College of Psychologists control over the use of titles using specific prefixes. This case was scheduled to go back to the court for clarification on this interpretation and we, as the then-Board of Registration for Social Workers, were granted intervenor status to present our views on this issue.

The Psychologists Regulation has since been amended and psychotherapist is not one of the titles exclusively reserved to that profession. When this matter went back to the court in December, the court determined that this social worker was no longer prohibited from representing himself as a psychotherapist. Registered Social Workers must accurately represent their qualifications and competence when informing the public of services offered. (See article on page 4 about marketing practices.)

## Workplace Information

As a Registered Social Worker you are required to provide the office with the name and contact information of all places where you practise social work. This information is necessary to keep the Register accurate and up-to-date. Although this question is asked in the renewal process every year, you are expected to inform the office at the time changes are made. This is not considered personal information under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. However, as workplace information is included in the On-line Registry only with your consent, you may choose which workplaces to include in it.

## Adult Guardianship

The Board established the Adult Guardianship Committee last spring to develop recommendations for standards, limits, or conditions that it might establish to meet the requirements of the Incapability Assessments Regulation. This Regulation is not yet in force but proposes to create a category of Qualified Health Care Providers, including Registered Social Workers, who will be allowed to prepare incapability assessments under the *Adult Guardianship Act*.

This dynamic Committee engaged in thorough discussions of the issues over a series of meetings last fall and this winter. It is continuing to develop recommendations and to support the development of training opportunities in this field. It is expected that the Committee will present its recommendations in a report to the Board this spring. At this time, we do not know when this Regulation will come into force.

## Employers! Did You Check Those Registrations?

If you require your staff to be registered so they may continue to represent themselves as social workers and comply with your standards and needs, you should check their registration status each year. If a Registered Social Worker does not renew registration by January 31 each year he or she loses this status. Former registrants have until April 30 to reinstate themselves by paying a late fee. A good time to check is at the beginning of each year, starting in February.

You have several easy ways to know if your staff have registered:

- Ask to see each person's card as the new ones issued each year include the expiry date.
- Check our new On-line Registry at [www.bccollegeofsocialworkers.ca](http://www.bccollegeofsocialworkers.ca)
- Request that our office send you a print-out of the RSWs at your agency or local office. 

## Reaching Out

### Community Meetings

We are planning community meetings to celebrate the new College, encourage interest in the first election to be held this fall, and to inform the social work community about the impact of the new *Social Workers Act*.

All Registered Social Workers in each community are invited to attend. We also invite members of the BC Association of Social Workers and key organizations such as the Ministry of Children and Family Development, local Health Authorities and non-profit agencies to attend. Please feel free to bring an interested guest.

Further details will be posted on our website. We will have an informal presentation followed by a discussion, refreshments, and a chance to meet your colleagues.

Note the following dates and do plan to attend:

**Victoria** Wednesday, April 15, 4.30 - 6.30 p.m.  
**Inn at Laurel Point**, 680 Montreal Street,  
T. 250.386.8721

**Kelowna** Wednesday, May 27, 4.30 - 6.30 p.m.  
**Coast Capri Hotel**, 1171 Harvey Avenue,  
T. 250.860.6060

**Prince George** Thursday, June 4, 4:30 - 6:30 p.m.  
**Inn of the North**, 770 Brunswick Street,  
T. 250.563.0121

### First Annual Meeting

The BC College of Social Workers will hold its first Annual Meeting later this year in conjunction with the annual conference of the BC Association of Social Workers. On the agenda are: the results of the Board election; an educational program; reports on the College's work; future plans.

Time: **Saturday afternoon**

Date: **November 7, 2009**

Place: **Renaissance Hotel, Vancouver**

Conference room rates are available. Further details will be posted on our website in the summer. Mark this date in your calendar and plan to join us for an informative afternoon.

## Adoption Work

Social workers interested in working in adoption are reminded that the College has a process for approving Registered Social Workers to prepare reports (Views of a Younger Child) under Section 30 of the *Adoption Act*, which may be done on a private practice basis. Contact the office for further information about this process.

From time to time, licensed adoption agencies seek experienced RSWs, particularly in rural/remote areas, to prepare home studies on contract. If this work interests you, please contact these agencies directly. Contact information is found at:

[www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/adoption/contacts.htm#agencies](http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/adoption/contacts.htm#agencies)

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