

College Conversation

The Newsletter of the British Columbia College of Social Workers

Pursuing the **Vision**

Elizabeth (Liz) Jones, RSW,
Chair, British Columbia College of Social Workers



I am writing this, my first column as Chair of the BC College of Social Workers, at the beginning of Social Work Week 2010. It provides me with an opportunity to reflect how far we've come – and how far we've yet to go.

I want to express my appreciation for the trust you have placed in me and my seven social work Board colleagues by electing us. And I want to thank the Board itself for electing me as Chair. As you know, the Board has eight elected social workers and four appointed public members. We represent a wide range of opinions and ideas. We hope this will lead to broad, perhaps dissenting, discourse on occasion and will strengthen our work together. As registrants, you are welcome to attend any of our Board meetings and, as well, to participate in certain committees.

It's taken us over 40 years to reach this point - the first *Social Workers Act* in BC came into force in 1969. The proclamation of the *Social Workers Act* that established our College was November 2008. The subsequent year-and-a-half has been spent developing and implementing bylaws and policy.

I would like to acknowledge all the work done by many people through the years to get us to this point in our

history. Susan Irwin and Sheila Begg, Registrar and Director, Registrations respectively, deserve special mention as staff who have worked to create and operationalize the new Act.

... our vision is mandatory registration of all social workers in the province.

We are a new Board with a new Executive composed of myself, Vice-Chair Susan Hogman and Treasurer Gary Mavis. We have a lot to learn and a lot to do. To date, we have had two meetings. The first was an orientation to the legislation, bylaws, and policy framework.

At the second, we reviewed the strategic directions set by the previous Board and integrated our own directions to create a plan for the short and long terms.

Part of our vision, as we already know, is mandatory registration of all social workers in the province. We will continue to move forward on the work of creating this vision while regulating the profession of social work and ensuring the safety of the public in relation to practice. ❁

Notice of Election

2010 call for nominations for election to the Board of the British Columbia College of Social Workers.

The election of members to the Board of the BC College of Social Workers will be held on Tuesday, November 2, 2010.

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From the Registrar

Susan Irwin, RSW

Registrar, British Columbia College of Social Workers

This year one challenging and significant project in which the BC College of Social Workers will be closely involved is the development of a national competency profile for the practice of social work. This is an undertaking of the newly created Canadian Council of Social Work Regulation (CCSWR) of which BCCSW is a founding member. All provincial regulatory bodies have now joined CCSWR and, working together, we have a great opportunity to address our common concerns.

The need to develop a competency profile arises from the revised Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT), which now encompasses issues from the Trade, Investment, and Labour Mobility Agreement (TILMA) between BC and Alberta. Under AIT a social worker registered in one province is entitled to registration in any other province based on his or her initial credential for registration.

There are limits to such default entitlement based on other issues, such as complaints, disciplinary matters, differing requirements for references, or criminal record checks. Limits may also arise when a social worker's scope of practice differs significantly between one province and another.

Most importantly, the ten provinces do not have the same academic standards for registration and this has led to discussion and dissent among the regulators.

It is critical that the social work profession across Canada resolves these differences; otherwise we will continue to be subject to provincial governments (who are the parties to these agreements) choosing expedient solutions.

Regulators of all professions have relied on academic credentials as a measure of the ability of individuals to practise their chosen profession. A key purpose of universities is to impart the knowledge acquired through study and research to those wanting to enter a profession and accreditation standards have been developed for academic programs for most professions.

This practice gives the public confidence that graduation from a recognized program is a valid indicator of a person's knowledge and ability.

As a regulator, however, we have a different mandate than that of educators – our purpose is to protect the public. It is well-known that there is more than one way to become knowledgeable and competent; not everyone who graduates from an academic program has the same competence and, in social work especially, much is gained from work experience and continuing education. Graduation from a university is a historical

event and is not a reliable indicator of one's ability years later.

Furthermore, Canadian jurisdictions do not all agree on the academic background required to practise social work; most do require a minimum of a bachelor's degree but two provinces accept a two-year diploma as sufficient qualification for practising as a social worker. In all cases, it should be apparent that, while completion of a particular education program is used as an assessment of qualification for practice, this does not guarantee a person's ability to practise social work safely, effectively and ethically.

Regulators need to have a clear picture of the practice they are regulating: a description or profile of the minimal competencies required is essential for effective regulation. This is particularly demanding in social work as the diversity of social work practice in different settings is great and the breadth and depth of knowledge required of individual social workers varies immensely.

Our profession cannot be assessed by technical skills alone but has strong underpinnings in both theory and values. Describing what we do has always been challenging.

There is some criticism of using a competency-based approach within social work as this is sometimes thought to be just a list of tasks that social workers perform. But the competency profile that all provinces have agreed to develop will be more comprehensive. It will indicate not only what work is done but also how well it is done – what level of proficiency is required.

A social worker's competencies not only indicate the skills used in practice but the abilities necessary to build those skills. They contain the social worker's underlying knowledge required to use complex skills of analysis, assessment, identification of a range of interventions, clarification of purpose and goals, and evaluation.

While professionals develop proficiency throughout a career, acquire expertise, and provide leadership, the role of regulation is to determine which individuals are

sufficiently prepared to enter the profession and practise safely. The focus of the CCSWR competency project will be to identify these minimum entry-to-practice competencies.

In addition to being able to describe what beginning social workers need to know and do, it is expected that the CCSWR project will assist in understanding why jurisdictions have adopted different entry requirements. Is the term “social work” being used to describe different activities and scopes of practice in provinces? Or do very different educational programs actually achieve the same results? How are these practice competencies linked with educational competencies (learning outcomes)?

Once we have clearly articulated what social workers must be able to do for entry-level practice (competency profile), the next step will be to identify objective and impartial measures to assess whether an individual actually has these abilities. When using academic credentials as a measure for registration (our only current standard indicator of competence), regulators will be looking for evidence that links graduation from specific programs to this competency profile. The issue of whether a national exam could be another impartial measure of the same competencies will also arise.

How is the CCSWR going to undertake such a major project? The good news is that we have already completed the first phase. Representatives of all ten social work regulatory bodies met in Calgary last June

... in social work much is gained from work experience and continuing education.

and developed a plan with the able assistance of a facilitator, Dr. David Cane.

Funded by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC), we spent two days exploring the concepts of competencies, competence, learning outcomes, performance indicators, and the relationship between education and regulation. We agreed on a plan that all provinces will participate in the development of a competency profile and its validation by a survey of all registered social workers across Canada. Regulators need standards that are fair and defensible so it is necessary to clearly articulate what we do.

The CCSWR has applied for more funding from HRSDC to conduct this project and complete the validation survey. This is a major undertaking that will cost several hundred thousand dollars. The proposal is in the final stages and we are optimistic that it will be approved. A committee of the CCSWR will oversee the project and hire a contractor.

The process will involve educational and practice stakeholders as well as regulators and include a countrywide, computer-based survey of social workers. The CCSWR plans to conduct this survey later this year. A high level of participation is important so we can gather comprehensive descriptions of social workers’ practices across Canada. **Please respond when the survey is distributed.** The resulting description of social work practice in Canada today will be a key element in ensuring standards and procedures that are transparent, objective, impartial and fair. 🌸

Notice of Election

There will be four Board positions elected for a two-year term commencing January 1, 2011 and ending December 31, 2012.

Nominations A nomination form and consent by the nominee must be received in the office by **Friday, September 3, 2010 at 4 p.m.** Nominees must be in good standing with the College. Any registrant may nominate a maximum of two registrants. Nomination forms will be posted on the College website in June. Submit forms and letters to The Registrar, British Columbia College of Social Workers, #302 – 1765 West 8th Ave., Vancouver, BC V6J 5C6.

Election Ballots and information about all candidates will be mailed to all Registered Social Workers at the end of September. The College will post details of candidates and the election process on its website, www.bccollegeofsocialworkers.ca, at the same time.

Ballots must be received in the College office by Monday, October 18, 2010.

2010 BCCSW Board Election Timeline

June

Nomination forms posted on College website, at www.bccollegeofsocialworkers.ca

Friday, September 3

All nomination forms and nominee consents to College office before 4.00 p.m.

End of September

Ballots mailed to all BCCSW registrants

Monday, October 18

Ballots to college office on or before this date

Tuesday, November 2

Counting of election ballots

Thursday, November 4

Election results announced at Annual General Meeting



Standards of Practice – The Duty of Confidentiality

Bonnie White, RSW, Practice Consultant

The social work relationship is characterized by trust, an overriding element of which is confidentiality. However, the duty of confidentiality to clients (and others) is often more complex than it first appears and the possibility that it may be breached affects the helping relationship. Not surprisingly, practice issues and dilemmas that arise around confidentiality can cause considerable stress for social workers.

The principles and interpretations in the *Standards of Practice* (updated November 2009) provide the basis on which social workers conduct sound and ethical practices, including confidentiality. However, many of the situations that social workers face in this regard are complicated, perplexing, and not easily resolved. Consequently, registrants trying to work through such difficulties often contact the College to discuss these difficult issues. Two recent cases, presented here, involved situations around confidentiality that were not at all straightforward for the social workers involved.

Reporting a Question of Exploitation

A social worker was providing grief counselling to a woman whose husband had recently died of a cancer that had caused some brain damage before his death. The couple lived in a retirement home where they could receive additional help and which provided meals. After his death, the wife found evidence that her husband had given one of the retirement home employees money and jewellery worth approximately \$30,000. The social worker felt this situation should be reported to the employer and the police but the wife firmly opposed pursuing this course of action.

Section 5.5 in the *Standards of Practice* applies to this situation, even though it does not provide a clear-cut course of action.

Social workers do not disclose the identity of and/or information about a person who has consulted or retained them unless:

- a) Disclosure is required by law or by a court, or
- b) The social worker has reasonable grounds to believe that the disclosure is necessary to prevent serious bodily harm to an identifiable person or group of persons, and in such circumstances the social worker shall disclose only such information as is necessary to prevent the prospective harm.

In coming to a decision regarding appropriate action social workers may find it helpful to ask themselves questions such as:

- Who is the client?
- What is my primary obligation?
- What applicable legislation allows or prohibits reporting?
- To whom do I have an obligation regarding the services I am providing?

When reflecting upon **5.5(a)** – “[unless] disclosure is required by law or by a court” – a social worker needs to determine what laws may apply to the situation and what conditions would allow or prohibit disclosure. Accordingly, a social worker to whom a court has issued a subpoena has to reveal confidential information when asked. In the situation described above, it is important to look at related pieces of legislation such as the *Adult Guardianship Act* which may provide guidance and direction in coming to a decision.

In addition, **Sections 5.7** and **5.8** of the *Standards of Practice* touch on the situation but also don’t directly resolve the problem that the social worker faced.

- 5.7** Social workers make reasonable efforts to ensure that the information disclosed is pertinent and relevant to the professional service for which clients have been contracted.
- 5.8** Social workers inform clients early in their relationship of the limits of confidentiality.

What these Sections indicate is the importance of making clients aware of limits to confidentiality. It is a good idea to have a handout on confidentiality that outlines clients’ rights and the conditions under which the social worker could be required to disclose information. Registrants should also make a note on clients’ files that they have discussed confidentiality issues.

Outcome In the case above, reviewing her options and seeking guidance from legislation and the *Standards of Practice*, the social worker came to the conclusion that she was obliged to maintain the confidentiality of her primary client, the wife. In this case there was no duty or authority to report.

A conflict between professional obligation and an employer's directive

Protecting clients' records is an essential part of confidentiality but social workers can sometimes face conflicting requirements regarding record security. This is the situation in which a social worker employed by a health agency found herself. She was asked to provide the password for her records to the records secretary for her unit. The social worker was concerned that this request could violate confidentiality for her clients. The social worker was also worried that someone else could access client files using her password. She felt that by revealing her password she was compromising client confidentiality.


Principle IV in the *Standards*, "The Social Work Record", relates directly to this issue:

- 4.14 Social workers take necessary steps to protect the confidentiality and security of paper records, faxes and electronic records.
- 4.13 Social workers employed by an organization acquire and maintain an understanding of the organization's policies and government legislation regarding access to confidential client information.
- 4.26 Social workers inform clients, upon request, of their policies regarding access to information.

Paragraph 2.15 in Principle II, "Competency and Integrity", would also help this social worker to take appropriate action since it states clearly: "If there is a conflict between BCCSW *Standards of Practice* and a social worker's work environment, the social worker's obligation is to the *Code of Ethics* and the *Standards of Practice*."

Outcome This situation opened a dialogue between practitioners and management to find a solution that met both the needs of records management and protection of client confidentiality.

The *Standards of Practice* cannot provide answers to every ethically problematic situation that social workers encounter but they do offer guidance and direction. Registrants can also check if there is any applicable legislation dictating the course of action they need to follow. Employees should review their organization's policies to examine how they relate to the situation. Ultimately, registrants need to apply their professional judgment, in conjunction with the *Standards of Practice*, when they face thorny questions involving confidentiality.

The College is always available to receive calls from Registered Social Workers with questions about practice issues. 

How to Maintain Electronic Privacy

Bonnie White, RSW, Practice Consultant

Social workers have every reason to both applaud and fear the use of modern technology in the workplace. Computers, fax machines, cell phones and BlackBerrys simplify the work day. However, in an ever-growing, technologically-based society, protecting privacy, particularly clients', is often challenging and sometimes problematic.

Below are some common-sense guidelines about protecting privacy and confidentiality in the social work environment.

Always remember that information about clients has to be kept confidential, keeping in mind that there are many more ways for confidentiality to be breached than there were ten years ago.

Taking a cautious attitude used to mean making sure that a briefcase

with confidential documents wasn't left in open view in a vehicle parked on the street. Social workers locked

their filing cabinets as a matter of course and never left a client's paper file on top of their desks.

Those are still smart, even obligatory, practices to observe but now most records are kept on computers

and other electronic devices in a variety of different programs and

formats. As well as workplace computers, social workers may use smartphones to record appointments and sometimes other details about clients such as phone numbers, addresses and even notes. Employers often provide social workers with laptop computers that are convenient but also easy to lose. To protect client information on a computer, follow these procedures:

- Keep client files in a secure, password-protected area of your computer and not on the desktop where anyone can view them.

... there are many more ways for confidentiality to be breached than there were ten years ago.

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2010 BCCSW Board



Chair

Elizabeth (Liz) Jones, RSW,
(serves until Dec 31, 2011) **Vancouver**

For the last 20 years Liz Jones has had a consulting business providing education, training, research, and organizational development services to social service and educational institutions around the province.

Currently a full-time faculty member at the UBC School of Social Work, she chairs the BSW Curriculum and Field Education Committee.

Ms. Jones previously served as the President of the BC Association of Social Workers in the 1990s, when she was involved in a number of initiatives to establish the BCCSW. She has a strong belief in, and commitment to, the mandatory registration of all social workers in the province.



Vice-Chair

Susan Hogman, RSW,
(serves until Dec 31, 2011) **Vancouver**

Susan Hogman has spent most of her career to date in health care working in all areas of acute care hospitals. From 2006 to the present, she has been the Director of Social Work at the BC Centre for Ability, a non-profit community agency working with disabled children and adults.

She is the President of the Social Workers in Health Society of BC and a member of the BC Association of Social Workers.

Ms. Hogman views registration as a commitment by social workers to the public. She works with her colleagues to ensure that the social work profession is ethical, accountable, and responsive.

Public member

Lorna Dittmar,

(serves until Jan 1, 2011) **Prince George/Valemount**

Before she retired, Lorna Dittmar was the Executive Director of Employment Action, an employment agency for injured and disabled workers, and of the Prince George Association for Community Living.

She is the Chair of the '10 by 10 Challenge', a provincial initiative to see 10% more people with disabilities hired by 2010. In addition, she is on the Prince George Council of Seniors and a member of other boards including the Patient Care Quality Review Board – Northern Health.

Ms. Dittmar has been awarded the Top Service Award from the Prince George Brain Injured Group, the Woman of Distinction Award, and the Canada 125 Medal for service to her community



Public member

R. Bruce Hallsor,
(serves until Jan 1, 2012) **Victoria**

Bruce Hallsor is a partner at Crease Harman LLP, British Columbia's oldest law firm. A past president of the Victoria Bar Association, he was named among the "Top 40 under 40" for Vancouver Island in 2007 and won the Queen's Golden Jubilee medal for community service in 2003.

Mr. Hallsor's community activities include serving as honorary solicitor to Scouts Canada in BC/Yukon, as President of Fair Voting BC, and as Chairman of the Monarchist League of Canada (Victoria Branch).

He has been appointed to the Victoria Board of Variance, the Saanich Arts Advisory Committee, the Saanich Advisory Design Panel and the Provincial Child Care Council.

Public member

Geraldine Manson,

(serves until Jan 1, 2012) **Parksville/Qualicum**

Geraldine Manson is a member of the Snuneymuxw First Nation. She has worked for her community for over 15 years, most recently as the Elders' Coordinator. She has been an elected council member for 9 years with her present term ending in 2012.

Ms. Manson shares traditional knowledge regarding protocols and the importance of knowing the culture for Snuneymuxw First Nation to surrounding local governments and non-profit organizations. In addition, she oversees archaeological projects within Snuneymuxw traditional territory.

Ms. Manson serves as a Young Elder-in-Residence with Vancouver Island University. She also sits as a Board member with Gabriola Island Museum and the Nanaimo District Museum.



Treasurer

Gary Mavis, RSW,
(serves until Dec 31, 2010) **Vancouver**

A Registered Social Worker since 1973, Gary Mavis has always been interested in how the social work profession has developed and been regulated. He has served on the Provincial Board of the BC Association of Social Workers.

He strongly supported the legislation that enacted the College and looks forward to the many and varied tasks ahead.

Mr. Mavis is currently the Executive Director of the Federation of Aboriginal Foster Parents, a position that keeps him in contact with many social workers throughout BC and exposes him to the variety of complexities they and their clients face.



Kathryn McCannell, RCSW,
(serves until Dec 31, 2010) **Victoria**

Kathryn McCannell is entering her fourth decade in the social work profession. She taught for 20 years in the Schools of Social Work at the University of Manitoba and the University of British Columbia. Her research, writing and practice have been in the areas of social networks, mental health, child and family services, and women's issues.

For the last decade she has maintained a clinical practice in Victoria. She is on the board of the Greater Victoria Women's Shelter Society and has been a volunteer educator at the Island Sexual Health Society for 10 years. She is working to clarify standards of practice for the complex situations that social workers face every day.



Susan Noakes, RSW,
(serves until Dec 31, 2011) **Victoria**

Susan Noakes is currently the staff social worker at The Law Centre in Victoria. As well as providing social work services to persons with low-incomes, she supervises social work students and educates law students about working in an interdisciplinary setting.

In the past, she has worked and volunteered in government and non-profit sectors including child protection (BC Central Interior), legal advocacy (Together Against Poverty Society), and children's guardianship (Community Living BC).

Ms. Noakes also served for 14 years as an active board member of TAPS and is presently Vice-Chair of the Victoria Family Violence Prevention Society. She believes strongly in advocating for the social work profession.



Bruce Northey, RSW,
(serves until Dec 31, 2010) **Prince George**

Bruce Northey is the Coordinator of the Social Service Worker Diploma program at the College of New Caledonia in Prince George where he has taught since 1988. He also maintains a part-time practice at Youth Forensic Psychiatric Services in Prince George.

Most of Mr. Northey's social work experience has been in the area of youth and family practice. He was President of the Northern Branch of the BC Association of Social Workers from 1989 to 1991 during which time he advocated for a School of Social Work at UNBC.

He is currently on the steering committee of the Association of College Educators in Social Work and Social Service Diploma Programs in Canada (ACCESS).



Glen Schmidt, PhD, RCSW,
(serves until Dec 31, 2011) **Prince George**

In 1994 Glen Schmidt began work as a faculty member at the University of Northern British Columbia's School of Social Work in Prince George. He also maintains a small private practice.

Dr. Schmidt is a member of the Provincial Board of the BC Association of Social Workers, the Provincial Board of Parent Support Services, the Provincial Board of the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), the Board of the CMHA branch in Prince George, and the Provincial Child and Youth Mental Health Advisory Committee.

He wants to create stronger linkages between the BC Association of Social Work, the schools of social work at provincial universities and colleges, the BC College of Social Workers, and practising social workers.



Public member
Heather Stilwell,
(serves until Jan 1, 2011) **Surrey**

Heather Stilwell is a former Trustee with the Surrey Board of Education on which she served for fifteen years, three of those as Chair. She also served on many district committees including the Anti-Vandalism Task Force, Surrey Association for Early Childhood Education, the Aboriginal Advisory Committee, and the Traditional School Advisory Committee.

A prolific speaker, Ms. Stilwell has addressed all kinds of audiences on a range of issues including taking care of the poor and respecting different cultures. Active in the community, she has served on many community organizations including Hope Adoption Services and the Surrey Association for the Mentally Handicapped.



Chi Ying Wong, RCSW,
(serves until Dec 31, 2010) **Vancouver**

Chi Ying Wong has been a Registered Clinical Social Worker since 2006. Her experience includes working with a multicultural population for their integration, separated/divorced adults, mental health, and vulnerable adults. She is a clinical educator and also has a private practice.

She is currently Chair of the Board's Quality Assurance Committee and a member of the Registration Appeals and Discipline Committees. Her participation in their proceedings enables her to appreciate the significant responsibilities of the College in fulfilling its mandate.

Ms. Wong has volunteered with the Association of Social Work Boards' Practice Analysis Task Force and has worked with and learned from Registered Social Workers in Canada and USA. ❁

For more information on the BCCSW Board, its members and committees, please visit the College's website at www.bccollegeofsocialworkers.ca



Questions of Professional Practice

Bonnie White, RSW, Practice Consultant

1 Reporting previous abuse suffered by a client

A social worker had learned from an adult client that the client had been sexually abused by a relative years ago. The client has never reported this abuse and does not wish to do so. The social worker wondered if it was his duty to report the abuse, even though it was against the client's wishes. He was concerned that the perpetrator would victimize others.

Outcome In situations like this, it should become easier to make a decision if social workers clarify whom they are serving and where their primary obligations lie. The *Standards of Practice* can assist and, in this particular instance, Section 5.5 applies:

- (a) Social workers do not disclose the identity of and/or information about a person who has consulted or retained them unless:
- (b) The social worker has reasonable grounds to believe that the disclosure is necessary to prevent serious bodily harm to an *identifiable person or group of persons*, and in such circumstances the social worker shall disclose only such information as is necessary to prevent the prospective harm.

A Supreme Court of Canada case that addressed conditions allowing disclosure of confidential information without consent stated that the risk of harm must be imminent.

In cases like this, social workers need to ask the following questions:

- Does the concern about preventing possible harm to a non-identifiable person override the client's request for confidentiality?

- Without definite knowledge that a child is at risk, can confidentiality be broken?

In this specific case, Section 5.5(b) of the *Standards of Practice* would indicate that confidentiality must be maintained in this situation.

2 Forwarding client files to a funding agency

A social worker is employed by an agency that contracts with the Ministry of Child and Family Development to provide counselling services to youth. The Ministry is asking for client information to be sent to them. The social worker called the College to seek advice on the need to report to the funding body.

Outcome When working for a contracting agency it is important to understand clearly who owns the files and what reporting requirements the funding agency requires. Sometimes the agency providing service has a contractual obligation to provide client information to the funder. To give just two examples: this may occur when services are provided to mandated clients under British Columbia's *Child, Family and Community Services Act* or employment services are funded by Human Resources Development Canada.

Both clients and social workers should know from the outset when there is an obligation to report certain information to the funding agency. **What is to be reported should be clearly outlined in the agency's confidentiality policy and discussed with clients at the beginning of service.** Clients should always be aware of what information is shared between agencies operating under a contract. 🌸

- When leaving your computer, make sure that others cannot view the client files that you keep on it.
- Have a password that uses numbers and letters to access your computer and don't reveal the password to anyone else unless your employer requires it as a matter of policy. Anyone with the password may access your files and you are then no longer able to vouch for their accuracy or confidentiality.
- Don't transfer files about clients to your personal computer.
- When using a laptop and working offsite, be particularly vigilant about confidential information. Personally identifiable information contained in a laptop or cell phone can disappear just as easily as the device itself.

When sending confidential documents as attachments by e-mail, it is important to assume that they could be read by anyone in transit. Treat e-mail

communication as you would a conversation – if you don't want to be overheard, go somewhere private. With e-mail and other electronic communications that means using a password (and even encryption if it's available), which is the electronic equivalent of a locked door.

- Each document sent as an e-mail attachment should be password-protected (if using Microsoft Word, go to Tools and use Secure Options).
- If you contact clients via e-mail, delete the files as soon as possible from your computer or place them in a secure area of your computer. But remember that e-mails are a part of the record and you may be required to keep them.
- It's all too easy to compromise confidentiality when client information is sent by fax. Information must be immediately retrieved by the receiving individual and not left where it can be seen by others.

Recognize that employers have the right to monitor your computer usage at work and to access all documents and e-mails in your computer. Employers also have back-up systems that copy all the information on your computer. Knowing that, social workers who are employees should adopt a precautionary attitude; in particular, they should avoid sending highly personal e-mails.

If you participate in a social networking site such as Facebook, remember that your employer can view the information you post. In addition, anyone with access to your site can print out all your correspondence and messages.

Finally, all social workers need to become more privacy conscious. Be aware of both the federal and provincial privacy laws as well as employers' policies. Take all necessary steps to protect personal information – whether it's your own information, your employer's, or, most importantly, your client's. ❁

Helpful Information on Privacy

On occasion the College likes to provide information that may be helpful to registrants as a source of information or reference guide.

The Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner is one such source and has a very helpful website. The website address is www.oipcbc.org. The section titled "Resources and Publications" provides the public with a wide range of published papers and resources on the topics of "Personal Privacy" and "Freedom of Information". This site contains resources for both public bodies and organizations. It also provides many useful tips for developing a privacy policy, protection of privacy, and conducting a privacy audit.



Provincial Legislation **Affecting Social Work Registrants in British Columbia**

The following list is provided as an aid to facilitating registrants' knowledge of legislation relevant to the professional practice of social work. This is not an exhaustive list. Legislation is constantly added, removed and amended. The website, www.bcclaws.ca, will provide you with access to all the current laws in British Columbia.

Provincial Legislation

Name	Purpose
Adoption Act , RSBC 1996, c.5	The purpose of this Act is to provide for new and permanent family ties through adoption, giving paramount consideration in every respect to the child's best interests.
Adult Guardianship Act , RSBC 1996, c.6	Creates provisions to deal with abuse and neglect of adults and appointment of substitute decision makers for incapable adults.
Age of Majority Act , RSBC 1996, c.7	Establishes the age of majority as 19 in the province.
Child, Family and Community Service Act , RSBC 1996, c.46	Creates a duty to promptly report where a person has reason to believe a child needs protection and lists relevant factors included in "best interests of a child".
Community Care and Assisted Living Act , SBC 2002, c.75	The Act defines the meaning of assisted living residence and outlines the licensing conditions.
Community Living Authority Act , 2004, c.60	This Act establishes a board authority regulation to provide for the delivery of SBC community support identified by the Minister.
Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Act , SBC 2002, c.41	To outline the conditions of eligibility for disability or hardship assistance under the Act.
Family Relations Act , RSBC 1996, c. 128	Covers child custody, guardianship, access, spousal and child support and division of property.
Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act , RSBC 1996, c.165	Creates specific information and privacy rights regarding information collected or controlled by public bodies, such as school boards, municipalities, hospitals or social service agencies.
Health Care (Consent) and Care Facility (Admission) Act , RSBC 1996, c.181	Codifies requirement that consent be obtained from or on behalf of patient for medical treatment or admission to care facility; sets out hierarchy of consent.
Health Professions Act , RSBC 1996, c.183	Umbrella legislation regulating health professions in BC.
Infants Act , RSBC 1996, c.223	Concerns the protection of infants' legal and financial interests. (Note: the legal definition of an "infant" is a person under the age of 19). Provides requirements for obtaining consent for health care from minors (infants).
Mental Health Act , RSBC 1996, c.288	Provides guidelines for how people with mental health illnesses are treated.
Patients Property Act , RSBC 1996, c.349	Provides for the declaration that a person is incapable and the appointment of a committee to handle their financial, legal, personal, and medical affairs.
Personal Information Protection Act , RSBC 2003, c.63	Legislates how private organizations in BC collect, use and disclose personal information.
Public Guardian & Trustee Act , RSBC 1996, c.383	The Act outlines the duties, powers and functions of the Public Guardian.
Representation Agreement Act , RSBC 1996, c.405	Allows a person to appoint someone as their legal representative to handle financial, legal, personal care and health care decisions if unable to make them on their own.
Representative for Children and Youth Act , SBC 2006, c. 29	Creates Representative for Children and Youth to perform a number of services including providing support to, assisting, informing and advising children and their families respecting certain designated services (including mental health services), and providing information and advice to children and their families about how to effectively access and how to become effective self-advocates with respect to those services.
Social Workers Act , SBC 2008, c.31	The Act directs the BC College of Social Workers to serve and protect the public, superintend the practice of social work and to establish qualifications of registrants.
Workers Compensation Act , RSBC 1996, c.492	Provides for the creation of the Workers Compensation Board to compensate injured workers and promote workplace safety.
Youth Justice Act , SBC 2003, c.85	Deals with proceedings and sentences available for youth (at least age 12) who commit provincial statute offences, and services available to these youths.

2010 Renewals

We have now completed our renewal process for 2010 but not without significant challenges. I wish to apologize to everyone for the inconvenience and frustration resulting from our office situation. We have had several different temporary staff who were not familiar with our system, a fax machine that continued to malfunction, and database problems that had to be adjusted. Mistakes were made in processing some renewals and it took longer than usual to balance the system and print receipts. We have greatly appreciated your patience during this time.

Susan Irwin RSW, Registrar

Clinical Registration

Based on recent news from some Registered Social Workers, we understand that the clinical designation is proving to be a valuable credential. Some employers and agencies are creating positions and Requests-for-Qualifications advertising that require or prefer the Registered Clinical Social Worker qualification.

The 2010 sitting of the clinical exam in Vancouver is tentatively set for Thursday, November 4, 2010. The exam will go ahead if there are at least **ten** candidates registered with the Association of Social Work Boards by October 1, 2010. Interested RSWs should submit their application for clinical registration and all supporting documents as soon as possible.

Once again, we hope we can arrange the exam before the BCCSW Annual General Meeting so it will be over in time for candidates to attend the AGM and symposium. The BCASW Fall Conference starts the following day so mark your calendars now to attend these College and Association special events – November 4, 5 and 6.

Congratulations!

The following new Clinical Social Workers passed the ASWB Clinical Exam on November 6, 2009 in Vancouver.

- Chapman, Tamara K.
- Cossom, Adrienne
- DeLeenheer, Irene
- Eleniak, Duanita G.
- Hamilton, Wendy M.
- Kelly, Laurie
- Nightbird, Marie
- Taylor, Gregory
- Van Volkingburgh, Marie

Changed Your Address? Don't Forget To 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 that the College has your current contact information for the following reasons:

- Under the *Social Workers Act*, the College must maintain an online registry that makes information on the status of your registration available to the public. If you permit, 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 options for updating your registrant file. Simply provide the information in writing via mail, fax or e-mail to the College at info@bccsw.ca or by telephone at 604.737.4916.

CHARD Update

Verification letters have now been sent to everyone who submitted information about their practice to include in the Community Health and Resource Directory. This provides an opportunity for you to confirm that the information is correct.

Later in the year, there will be more information about how individual social workers may access their data on the CHARD database so they can update information regarding their worksites or practice offices and areas of practice.

The CHARD project will be expanded to some other regions this spring and is expected to be provincewide by the summer. This will allow physicians to access information about Registered Social Workers and other mental health professionals in their regions in order to increase access to services for their patients.

Upcoming 2010 BCCSW Meetings

Board The next Board meetings will be held on Saturday, June 12 and Saturday, September 11.

AGM The 2010 Annual General Meeting of the British Columbia College of Social Workers will be held on **Thursday, November 4, 2010.**

Registrants by Region

Fraser Valley	166
Interior	351
Lower Mainland/South Coast	1077
North	142
Out of Country	33
Out of Province	38
Vancouver Island/Gulf Islands	381

Total All Regions 2188

BC CSW 2010 Officers and Committees

British Columbia
College of Social Workers

From time-to-time there are opportunities for Registered Social Workers to become involved in the work of the College's committees and task forces. We welcome applications from registrants interested in being appointed. Please send a letter with your current résumé by e-mail marked c/o Registrar to info@bccsw.ca or mail an application to our office. Many statutory committees have a set number of members and new applicants will be considered when vacancies arise. At times the Board appoints task forces to address specific policy issues.

Chair

Elizabeth (Liz) Jones, RSW

Vice-Chair

Susan Hogman, RSW

Finance Committee

**Gary Mavis (Chair),
Liz Jones, Susan Hogman**

Registration Committee

**Susan Hogman (Chair),
Glen Schmidt, Bruce Northey,
Heather Stilwell, Susan Waldron**

Registration Appeals Committee

**Bruce Hallsor (Chair),
Chi Ying Wong, Gary Mavis**

Inquiry Committee

**Kathryn McCannell (Chair),
Susan Noakes, Geraldine Manson,
Janice Murphy, Jim Campbell**

Discipline Committee

**Bruce Hallsor (Chair),
Lorna Dittmar, Gary Mavis,
Heather Stilwell, Chi Ying Wong**

Quality Assurance Committee

**Chi Ying Wong (Chair),
Lorna Dittmar, Bruce Northey,
Glen Schmidt, Susan Noakes**

College Conversation is the twice-yearly newsletter published by the British Columbia College of Social Workers.

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Board to December 31, 2010

Chair

Elizabeth (Liz) Jones, RSW

Vice-Chair

Susan Hogman, RSW

Public Members

**Lorna Dittmar
Bruce Hallsor
Geraldine Manson
Heather Stilwell**

Social Work Members

**Gary Mavis, RSW (Treasurer)
Kathryn McCannell, RCSW
Susan Noakes, RSW
Bruce Northey, RSW
Glen Schmidt, RCSW
Chi Ying Wong, RCSW**

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