

College Conversation

The Newsletter of the British Columbia College of Social Workers

The Challenges Ahead

Susan Irwin, RSW, Registrar

As the year ends, the transition to the BC College of Social Workers from the former Board of Registration is nearing completion. We have been intensely active over the past two years: from detailed involvement in drafting the new legislation, to observing first reading of the *Social Workers Act* in the Legislature in the spring of 2008, to organizing support for continuation to third reading and royal assent. We finalized the Bylaws for the new College and celebrated when the Act came into force in November 2008.

The hectic pace continued in 2009. We held meetings in three communities throughout the province, organized the election of Board members, implemented changes to the College's committees and revised the *Standards of Practice*. As we near the end of the year, we have had our first election and held the College's inaugural Annual General Meeting.

The College's first elected Board, which also has four government-appointed members, will assume office on January 1, 2010. Its members have distinct challenges ahead as the College establishes and expands its role in protecting the public but much of the organizational groundwork has already been laid.

The transitional Board that oversaw these changes has adopted policies and identified issues in response to changing conditions – it has set the direction for future work. Key activities for the College in the coming year will be participating in the development of a national social work competency profile, implementing an exam for all registration applicants, and developing resources to assist social workers in achieving best practices. The Board will continue development of a communications policy and support the work of the new Canadian Council of Social Work Regulators.

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Season's Greetings

Our office will be closed on Thursday December 24, 2009 and reopen on Monday, January 4, 2010.

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Out and about in the Province

Susan Irwin, RSW

Registrar, British Columbia College of Social Workers

The College held meetings throughout the province in spring 2009 to celebrate the establishment of the BC College of Social Workers and to provide information to the social work community about the resultant changes.

In April, about 60 people attended our reception in Victoria. As well as registrants, the participants included representatives from the government and key local social work agencies. Kathryn McCannell, RCSW, and Bruce Hallsor, public member, were the Board hosts for this event. Kathryn welcomed everyone and Leah Bailey, Director of Legislation for the Ministry of Children and Family Development, provided opening remarks summarizing the importance, background and process of bringing in new legislation. She also commented that, although the existing exemptions regarding the requirement to be registered were being maintained at the present, the Ministry would be developing a process for reviewing this policy and consulting stakeholders.

There was an overall sense of appreciation that these legislative changes and proposals recognized an expanded role for social work.

At each event a short PowerPoint presentation summarized what changed and what remained the same when the new *Social Workers Act* came into force. This was followed by questions and discussion regarding regulation of the profession. At each meeting there were refreshments since these were social events and celebrations.

In Victoria, the large audience quickly formed into small discussion groups as people found an opportunity to greet old friends and meet new colleagues. A key topic of these discussions was the implication of the new category for Registered Clinical Social Workers and its expanded scope of practice. Concerns were expressed about the possible impact of current practices in some agencies regarding documentation of clinical conditions.

Another topic of interest was the government's proposal to include social work as a profession authorized to prepare incapability assessments and prospects for other areas of expanded scope of practice. There was an overall sense of appreciation that these legislative changes and proposals recognized an expanded role for social work.

The next meetings were in Kelowna (May) and Prince George (early June). Both meetings were very well attended and the same format was followed.

In Kelowna, Janice Murphy, RSW, welcomed everyone on behalf of the Board and Leon Louis provided the cultural greeting on behalf of the Aboriginal community. The whole group engaged in a lengthy discussion before turning to small groups. The key issue for social workers at this meeting was the policy regarding continuing competence requirements. The College's

representatives were able to inform those present that, after a lengthy review process, the Board had decided not to establish mandatory continuing competence or professional development requirements. Instead the College would encourage social workers to assess their own needs and undertake whatever activities would be useful in maintaining competence in their area of practice.

(For more information on this issue, read the article, "Continuing Competence", on page 9.) A lively discussion ensued as some social workers expressed the view that the College should establish some mandatory professional development requirements.

The Prince George meeting was hosted by the Board's Chair, Jim Campbell, RCSW. This time the group, the smallest of the three, decided to have a more formal discussion following the presentation. They felt it would be more productive to sit in a group and engage in a single conversation.

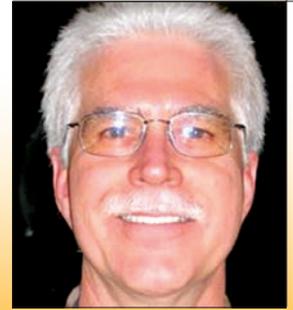
The main topic of interest in Prince George was the omission from the new *Social Workers Act* of a requirement for mandatory registration of all social workers. Those present discussed the importance of continuing to work on this issue as well as the impact of the Board's decision to implement an exam as a basic registration requirement in the future.

Social workers at each of these events expressed appreciation for the efforts of the Board to reach out to communities outside Vancouver. They welcomed the opportunity to engage in discussion of relevant issues for the increased recognition of the profession that comes with the establishment of the new BC College of Social Workers. 

From the Chair

Jim Campbell, MSW, RCSW

Chair, British Columbia College of Social Workers



In May 2004 I had the privilege of being appointed by the Government of British Columbia to be a member of the Board of Registration for Social Workers (BRSW). As I come to the end of my term as the first Chair of the BC College of Social Workers (BCCSW), I have had the opportunity to reflect on these experiences.

It has been a fascinating and challenging time of change for the social work profession. The implementation of a new *Social Workers Act* establishing a self-regulating College of Social Workers was a long-time wish that finally became a reality. The groundwork for this change had been occurring over the years and I would like to acknowledge the work done by previous Board members in moving this goal forward.

The provincial government has been a close partner in the development of the provisions that are now in place to regulate the social work profession in British Columbia. Members of the Board and committees had a rare opportunity to have input into the creation of this regulatory framework through the draft Act and the development of the College's Bylaws.

This required not only many hours of detailed discussion but the building of a broad analytical perspective on the role and responsibilities of professional regulation.

At the same time as the Board strengthened its legal mandate and procedures for the community at large, we also strengthened our internal organization and external relationships. In the past couple of years the Board developed and consolidated its policy governance model and has adopted a policy manual which articulates the role of Board and staff. This document forms the basis for orientation and guidance to new Board members.

At national and international levels I had the pleasure of the BCCSW increasing its active membership with the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) and of being a founding member of the newly-created Canadian Council of Social Work Regulators (CCSWR).

These organizations provide avenues to work collaboratively with our colleagues in other jurisdictions, to expand educational opportunities for professional regulators, and to negotiate responses to interprovincial labour mobility issues across Canada.

As a member and Chair of the Board, I have appreciated the opportunity to work with social workers across the province, across the country, and internationally. As this transition period ends and the first elected Board prepares to take office in January 2010, they will

face new challenges. But I am confident that a solid foundation of policy and relationships within the social work community have been formed to support their ongoing work.

In closing, I thank my colleagues who are also completing their terms on the Board: Sharon Coates; Darlyne Gehring, RCSW; Sri Pendakur, RSW; Janice Murphy, RSW; Peter Quick, RSW; and Susan Waldron, RSW. I also wish everyone the best in the BCCSW's future endeavours. Thank you for this experience – it has broadened my appreciation of the many facets of the social work profession. 

As a member and Chair of the Board, I have appreciated the opportunity to work with social workers across the province, across the country, and internationally.

The Challenges Ahead (Continued from page 1)

There are several important strategic issues impacting the regulation of social work that will require attention in the future. The increasing use of technology will affect direct social work practice as well as regulatory practice and will impact standards regarding record-keeping, confidentiality and privacy. An aging population will affect the supply of social workers,

opportunities for supervision, and changes in client services. Social work within the Aboriginal community is evolving to reflect different practices and values as well as service delivery models. These issues, and others, will continue to present challenges to the College in protecting the public. 



Principles of Informed Consent

Bonnie White, RSW, Practice Consultant

One of the basic principles and values of social work practice is that clients have the right to accept or refuse clinical treatment or other service. Paying attention to this right of informed consent shows respect for an individual's freedom, autonomy and dignity – values that are fundamental to the ethics of social work practices.

Regulated health care professionals such as hospital social workers must comply with the *Health Care (Consent) and Care Facilities (Admissions) Act* which outlines conditions of informed consent. Although this legislation does not govern social workers in other settings, case law has shown that the same informed consent principles apply in all environments.

Social workers should recognize that informed consent is not static but ongoing – it is part of building a relationship with a client.

For there to be a valid and fully informed consent, the social worker must provide the client with sufficient information for understanding the purposes, risks and benefits of the proposed service. The client must have an opportunity to ask questions and receive answers to address concerns.

Briefly stated, a client's consent is considered to be valid and informed if it has met all the following elements:

- consent relates to the proposed services to be provided
- consent is given voluntarily
- consent is not obtained through fraud or misrepresentation
- the social worker has used clear and understandable language to inform the client of the following:
 - the purpose and nature of the services
 - the risks and benefits related to the services
 - reasonable alternatives
 - relevant costs
 - any limits to services because of third-party payer conditions
 - the time frame covered by the consent
- the client has had an opportunity to ask questions and receive answers.

Even after a client has consented, the process does not end. A social worker must ensure that the informed consent continues throughout the counselling relationship. The client's consent may be required again if there is a significant change to the circumstances and conditions originally agreed to. (An example would be a modification to the nature of the services.) It is also important to remember that a client can withdraw consent at any time, effectively ending the social-work relationship.

Social workers should document their clients' consent. It is sufficient to make a written annotation in the record that the client has given oral consent but a better practice is for the client to sign a consent-to-treatment form which affirms that the client has been fully informed and consented freely to the service.

Social workers should recognize that informed consent is not static but ongoing – it is part of building a relationship with a client. They should also consider the impact of diversity in our society; language, age, cultural background and other factors can affect the informed consent process. Knowing how to address these challenges is important for protecting clients' rights and promoting their autonomy.

In instances when clients lack the capacity to provide informed consent, social workers should protect clients' interests by seeking permission from an appropriate representative or substitute decision-maker. In such cases, a social worker follows the same protocol but should seek to ensure that the third party acts in a manner that is consistent with a client's wishes and interests. Social workers should also take reasonable steps to augment such clients' ability to give informed consent.

Children present even more complications. Section 17 of the *Infants Act* discusses obtaining consent from a minor. The Act deems a minor to be anyone under the age of 19.

Section 17 states that "an infant may consent to health care whether or not that health care would, in the absence of consent, constitute a trespass to the infant's person, and if an infant provides that consent, the consent is effective and it is not necessary to obtain a consent to the health care from the infant's parent or guardian." But the Act further states that such consent does not exist unless a social worker:

- (a) has explained to the infant and has been satisfied that the infant understands the nature and consequences and the reasonably foreseeable benefits and risks of the health care, and

(Continues on page 5)

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 social worker was providing therapy to a child who was living with one parent. The other parent was receiving counselling from another professional who made a complaint about the social worker on behalf of his client. The parents were engaged in a dispute about custody and access to their child. At the request of the custodial parent, the social worker had written a report to the family court regarding her assessment of the child. In this report, she identified risks she believed were presented by the non-custodial parent and made a strong recommendation that this parent should have limited access to and custody of this child.

However, she had never met or interviewed the other parent: she based her conclusions on her observations of the child and the comments of the custodial parent. Furthermore, she had

made recommendations regarding custody and access when her role was not that of a neutral assessor since she was the child's therapist. The Inquiry Committee concluded that this conduct had breached the *Standards of Practice* – the social worker had made recommendations to the court about another person whom she had not met or interviewed and when her role was that of therapist, not assessor.

Outcome The social worker agreed to consult an experienced social worker, approved by the Committee, to review the standards for preparing reports for a court and the differences between preparing neutral assessments and advocating on behalf of a client.

2 The mother of a child who was seen briefly by a social worker complained that the social worker refused to confirm that she had seen the child or provide any

information about her services to the child. The mother suspected that the father had taken the child to see the social worker and called the social worker to confirm this and find out what was happening.

The social worker did not provide the requested information as she believed this was a breach of confidentiality to her client. However, after seeking advice about sharing information and confirming that the parents had joint guardianship and custody, the social worker contacted the complainant to apologize and to provide the requested information.

Outcome The Inquiry Committee decided to take no further action as the social worker sought consultation when faced with an unfamiliar situation and rectified this situation by contacting the mother and providing relevant information. ❁

Principles of **Informed Consent** (Continued from page 4)

(b) has made reasonable efforts to determine and has concluded that the health care is in the infant's best interests.

So the minor's right to self-determination is limited by the requirement that the social worker make reasonable efforts to ensure that the treatment serves the minor's "best interests". Good practice suggests that, if possible, it often helps to positively engage the parents in the treatment plan. However minors (under the age of 19) have privacy rights and social

workers are strongly advised to obtain consent from a capable minor before discussing confidential health matters with the parents. The social worker needs to use judgment with a mature minor and respect the minor's view of who should be involved with him or her.

In all instances, upholding a client's right to informed consent helps to build a treatment relationship founded on trust and mutual agreement as well as full and active client participation. ❁

Summary Report

First Annual General Meeting of the British Columbia College of Social Workers

Susan Irwin, RSW

Registrar, British Columbia College of Social Workers

The first Annual General Meeting of the BC College of Social Workers was held in Vancouver on November 7, 2009. The meeting was chaired by Sharon Coates, Vice Chair of the Board, since the Chair, Jim Campbell, was absent due to illness. The business meeting was preceded by an educational presentation (reported elsewhere in this newsletter).

The meeting was called to order at 4:40 p.m. A quorum of 45 Registered Social Workers was required and was present. There were also several guests attending.

The purpose of the AGM is to provide an opportunity for the Board to account for its decisions and actions to the membership. With this intent in mind, Sharon introduced those members of the 2009 Board present at the meeting and then gave a report on the work of the Board, highlighting key recent activities:

- The focus of the work this year has been on implementing the new *Social Workers Act* and completing the transition from the former Board of Registration to the College.
- Some committee structures and procedures have changed to reflect this new governing status.
- The Board has developed a policy governance manual.
- The Board is developing a communications strategy for the College.
- The College was instrumental in establishing the Canadian Council of Social Work Regulators, consisting of all provincial social work regulatory bodies and continues to be active with the Association of Social Work Boards, which comprises social work regulators throughout North America.

In her report, the Registrar, Susan Irwin, informed the meeting that there are currently 2325 Registered Social Workers and outlined the proposed competency profile project which is expected to survey social workers across Canada in 2010.



The 2009 Board, left to right: Darlynn Gehring, Susan Hogman, Gary Mavis, Sharon Coates, Kathryn McCannell, Janice Murphy, Peter Quick

There were also verbal reports from the following committees:

- Finance, **Peter Quick**
- Registration, **Peter Quick**
- Registration Appeals, **Gary Mavis**
- Quality Assurance, **Sharon Coates**
- Inquiry, **Darlynn Gehring**
- Discipline, **Susan Hogman.**

Each committee representative described the key responsibilities of individual committees and summarized their main activities during the year.

Following presentation of the reports, the meeting was opened up to questions from the floor. The main concern expressed by members regarded any plans for addressing mandatory registration. The response was that the College continues to request this. It has been advised by the government that, although there was limited follow-up on this issue in recent months due to a change of Minister and staff, this issue is again being considered. The Ministry of Children and Family Development is planning a process to consult on the matter.

The meeting adjourned at 5:15 p.m. ❁

Please note: A full report of this meeting will be sent to all registrants early in 2010. The above is a brief summary of the AGM's proceedings.



Ethics and Social Work Practice

Dr. Kerry Bowman, MSW, a bioethicist at Mount Sinai Hospital in Toronto, gave a stimulating presentation on ethics and social work practice to the first Annual General Meeting of the BC College of Social Workers. His background as a social worker in child welfare and health care provides a solid foundation for his appreciation of the ethical challenges facing social workers. His current work as a bioethicist in a leading hospital provides an analytical perspective that may be challenging to achieve when social workers are in the midst of the daily workload.

In a quick summation of the early history of social work and social activism, Dr. Bowman described the roots of our profession as deriving from rapid social change at the turn of the twentieth century and adopting a more conservative approach in the decades following the 1930s. Another shift in the 1960s saw an increasing recognition of class, racial and social justice generate radical activism. Then the women's movement, as well as the gay and lesbian movements, further challenged our thinking. In recent decades a non-activist professionalism has emerged in response to growing political conservatism and reduction in social service expenditures.

...the current dilemma in social work: social justice advocacy in embracing human diversity while also establishing social work as a competent and refined clinical discipline within health care, child welfare and public service.

diversity while also establishing social work as a competent and refined clinical discipline within health care, child welfare and public service. This poses some questions: Can we do both? How can we do both? Can social work clinicians take positions on socially contentious issues?

Social work is truly values based. It is "moral terrain" as we deal with struggling, vulnerable, people. Dr. Bowman saw ethical standards as changing dramatically during the profession's history from sparse, vague, statements to specific codes and standards. Compared to other professions social work has been slow to identify ethical standards and practice

and this is still an emerging field. For example, he asked some rhetorical questions: How good are we at obtaining truly informed consent? How do we balance patient confidentiality with community protection?

He saw this trend as leading to the current dilemma in social work: social justice advocacy in embracing human

(Continues on page 8)



The 2009 AGM. Top, left to right: **Cathy Lopton** and **Bonnie White**, outgoing Board members; **Sheila Begg**, Deputy Registrar with **Gary Mavis**, continuing Board member; **Janice Murphy**, outgoing Board member.

Bottom, left to right: **Peter Quick** and **Sharon Coates**, outgoing Board members; **Shelley Pennington** and **Shauna Gagnon**; **Helen Vaughan** with **Janice Murphy**, outgoing Board member.

Ethics and Social Work Practice (Continued from page 7)

Dr. Bowman saw four key ethical challenges facing social workers today:

- 1 Clinical methods emphasize control, efficiency and expediency through short-term, strategic approaches. They may ignore the qualities of ethical, imaginative, creative, spiritual and other subjective experiences that inform character and wisdom in overcoming human challenges.
- 2 Social work codes of ethics set desired norms for professional conduct and values-based practice but are not able to address complex situations and determine professional judgment. The clinical mindset asks: Why is this happening? A procedural (or codes) mindset asks: What should we do? An ethical mindset asks: What ought we to do?
- 3 How can we be mindful of diversity while respecting autonomous choices? Autonomy is at the heart of social work practice, yet this is an unfamiliar concept

to many in our diverse cultural society. How do we balance autonomy with the views of many cultures emphasizing conformity? How well suited is social work to “moral pluralism” and what are the limits to diversity?

- 4 A more recent ethical challenge links human well-being to environmental health. What is social work’s position on the protection of non-human life? What are the obligations of justice to future generations? This is new terrain leading to a need for consciousness raising.

Dr. Bowman concluded his presentation with a challenge to social workers to provide leadership in ethical decision-making in the workplace. Social work is well-placed to provide such leadership from our person-in-environment perspective. “If not us, then who?” he asked. Social work has the skills and analysis to promote free and autonomous choices of individuals while addressing issues of risk to the community. 

The College’s First Board Election

The New Board

The following social workers (listed alphabetically) have been elected to the Board of the BC College of Social Workers. They will take up their duties on January 1, 2010. In addition, the Government of British Columbia will appoint four public representatives to the Board. In the next issue of *College Conversation* we will introduce each member in greater detail.

Susan Hogman*
(Vancouver):
Director of Social Work,
BC Centre for Ability

Liz Jones*
(Vancouver):
Faculty, UBC School
of Social Work

Gary Mavis**
(Vancouver):
Executive Director, Federation
of Aboriginal Foster Parents

Kathryn McCannell**
(Victoria):
Private practice,
clinical social work

Susan Noakes*
(Salt Spring Island):
Social worker, Law Centre

Bruce Northey**
(Prince George):
Coordinator, Social Service
Worker Program, College
of New Caledonia

Glen Schmidt*
(Prince George):
Faculty, UNBC School of Social
Work

Chi Ying Wong**
(Burnaby)

**Term of office:
Jan 1, 2010 - 31 Dec, 2011*

***Term of office:
Jan 1, 2010 - 31 Dec, 2010* 

Continuing Competence

Bonnie White, RSW, Practice Consultant



One of the College's primary objectives according to the *Social Workers Act* is "to establish and maintain a continuing competence program to promote high practice standards amongst registrants." Since 2008, our Quality Assurance Committee has focussed on reviewing the current continuing competence programs of other regulatory bodies in Canada so that it can recommend an approach suited to the College and the social work profession in British Columbia.

The challenge for College registrants is to maintain and extend their professional knowledge and skills in a rapidly changing environment. There is a range of ways within which professional learning can occur. Opportunities for professional growth and development might include but are not limited to:

- academic programs offered through universities and colleges
- attending conferences and workshops
- presentations by practice specialists
- mentoring/peer review or in-house training.

Of course, practitioners often learn much through discussing practice issues on the job. It is not necessary to attend only courses that provide either credits or hours – the College recognizes the wide range of ways continuing education is achieved.

After looking at a number of models and conducting its own survey regarding the possible use of a self-assessment tool, the College's Board has decided not to establish mandatory reporting or monitoring of professional education activities. Instead, it is taking an approach to continuing competence based on an adult education model.

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In using this approach, the College will encourage registrants to:

- conduct self-assessments of their practices
- identify areas of strength and weakness
- determine the areas of practice that require new learning
- set learning objectives to meet the goals they have set
- engage in learning activities and record relevant information about them.

As a registrant, you won't be required to submit information about your ongoing involvement in educational activities to the College. Nonetheless, be sure to keep records of both your informal participation in professional development and formal educational courses. This would be important if your competence in an area of practice is questioned as well as useful for further educational planning.

Currently, the College is focussing its attention on developing practice guidelines and updating the *Standards of Practice* to provide resources that will assist social workers in maintaining their professional competence. It is important for all College members to demonstrate a commitment to professional growth that adheres to the *Standards of Practice* and the *Code of Ethics*. ❁

Questions of Professional Practice

If I am aware that a registered social worker is harming a client, what do I do?

Section 40 of the *Social Workers Act* requires that 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."

Reporting such matters is required even if disclosing them is prohibited under another act. The social worker should also use his or her best efforts to advise the client ahead of time that the social worker is required to file the report, as this will limit confidentiality normally expected by clients. ❁

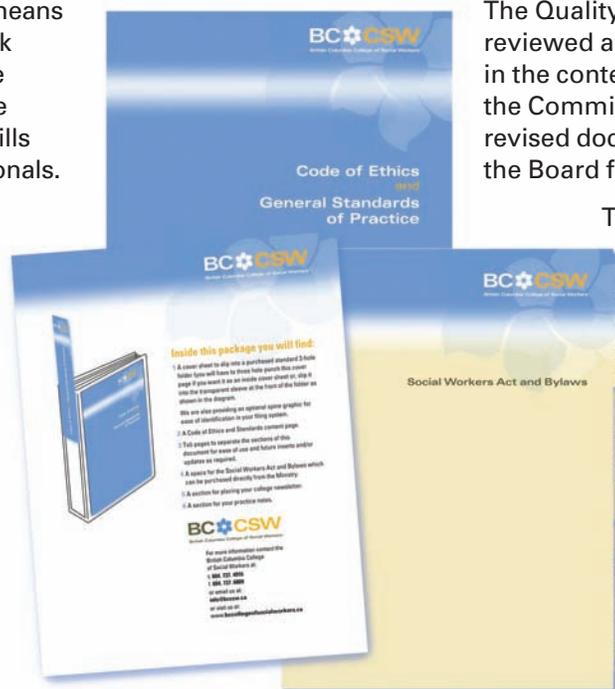
New Standards of Practice Approved

Bonnie White, RSW, Practice Consultant

In recent months, the College's staff and Board have been busy reviewing our current *Standards of Practice*. It is important that these are reviewed from time to time to make sure they are comprehensive, meet the requirements of evolving practice, and are useful to members. The current *Standards of Practice* were adopted in 2002, and amended in 2004 and 2006, but have not been substantially updated since. *The Standards of Practice* needed to be updated and reprinted to reflect the change from a Board of Registration to a College, changes in legislation, and evolving practice.

The *Standards* describe what it means to be a member of the social work profession and, together with the *Code of Ethics*, put into action the values, ethics, knowledge and skills expected of social work professionals. All members of the College are accountable to these standards. They provide guidelines for the regulation of registrants to ensure high quality service to the public. They set out the minimum levels of practice and conduct for members, promote public trust and confidence, and are used to adjudicate issues of professional practice and complaints.

During this latest review, the eight "Principles with Interpretations" that make up the core of social work practice have been maintained and revised where necessary. Most changes have occurred in the sections on record keeping and confidentiality, two areas in which the college has found that members need the most help. The changes provide more help and clarity in day-to-day practice. We recommend that College registrants read and consider all eight "Principles" together with the *Code of Ethics*.



The Quality Assurance Committee reviewed and evaluated all changes in the content of the *Standards*. After the Committee finished its work, the revised document was submitted to the Board for approval.

The Committee particularly recommended that the revised *Standards* have a new appearance. We have attempted to use simpler and clearer language in the revised package and to present it in a format that is more 'member friendly'. It includes new features such as a glossary and tabs for easier navigation.

In addition, the College would like to support its members by providing written material on practice issues that come to the attention of the Inquiry Committee. We suggest that members consolidate all materials received from the College in a resource binder for easy access and use.

The Board approved the revised *Standards of Practice* on November 7, 2009. The package will be mailed to registrants by the end of the year. 🌸

We have attempted to use simpler and clearer language in the revised package and to present it in a format that is more 'member friendly'. It includes new features such as a glossary and tabs for easier navigation.

Can You Write Examination Questions?

The Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) is looking for qualified social workers to write questions for the licensing/ registration tests used in the United States and Canada.

Interested applicants must have a degree in social work and currently valid social work registration as well as be practising social work (this includes teaching in a social work program). They need to have the ability to produce 30 multiple-choice questions that meet ASWB standards. All writers must attend a training session (typically held during the last weekend in June), with food, lodging and travel expenses paid by the ASWB. All writers must be able to work with computers and e-mail.

Social workers from all levels of social work education, licensure and experience are needed. Writers from diverse demographic and practice backgrounds are encouraged to apply. Selections are limited to 20-25 writers. Successful applicants will be paid \$1,000 for a set of 30 test questions determined to meet ASWB standards, written over a six- to eight-month time frame.

Applicants must complete all screening documents and supply other information via e-mail by December 1, 2009 to be considered. Visit www.aswb.org for more information and application forms.

Next Board Meeting

The College's new Board will hold its first meeting on Friday, January 22, 2010. If you wish to attend, please call the College office at 604.737.4916 or e-mail us at info@bccsw.ca. Give us several days' notice of your attendance so we can make adequate arrangements. We will let you know the time and place of the meeting.

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 that the College has your current contact information for the following reasons:

- Under the *Social Workers Act*, the College must maintain an On-Line 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 On-Line 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.*

To advise the office of a change in your contact information, please use the form found under "Registrants" on our website at www.bccollegeofsocialworkers.ca.

Join a College Committee

From time to time there may be opportunities for Registered Social Workers to become involved in the

work of the College's committees. The following committees may include non-Board members:

- **Registration** (reviews challenging applications and develops policy)
- **Registration Appeals** (second level of appeal on applications)
- **Inquiry** (reviews complaints about social workers)
- **Quality Assurance** (develops the *Standards of Practice*)

The College welcomes applications from registrants interested in being appointed to one of these committees. Please send a letter with your current résumé by e-mail marked c/o Registrar to info@bccsw.ca or mail them to our office. 

Where We Work and Who Employs Us

Below is a snapshot, as of the end of August 2009, showing where the College's 2285 Registered Social Workers were employed.

Health authorities (272, Fraser; 139, Interior; 50, Northern; 61, Provincial; 278, Vancouver Coastal; 115, Vancouver Island)	915
Ministry of Children and Family Development:	162
BC Government – other agencies	49
Non-profit agencies	420
Education	68
Private business	84
Municipal governments	6
School Boards	9
Aboriginal bands	24
Federal Government	38
Self-employed	248
Other	175
Retired	40
Out of jurisdiction	47
Total:	2285

CHARD - New Physician's Resource Will List Registered Social Workers

The BC College of Social Workers will be participating in a new web-based directory, the Community Healthcare and Resource Directory or **CHARD**, that will assist physicians and other primary healthcare providers in accessing mental health and addictions professionals. An initiative of the Ministry of Health Services, the BC Medical Association and HealthLink BC, **CHARD** will provide general practitioners with a search capability to identify social workers and other specialists to whom they can refer their patients.

CHARD's database will include all Registered Social Workers as well as other professionals. To better serve their patients, physicians will be able to select professionals by location. In addition, to assist in the referral process, social workers may include contact information, information about the services they provide, and the location and area of their practices.

The BCCSW will provide the names and registration status of all Registered Social Workers directly to the **CHARD** project. This information is currently provided on our On-Line Registry and is required by law. Social workers will also have access to the **CHARD** website directly so they can input their own contact and service information within guidelines approved by the College.

Disclosure of any personal information collected by the BCCSW is governed by the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* so the College has been exceedingly careful in ensuring that all provisions of the Act regarding disclosure of any information about registrants have been met.

CHARD will be available provincewide in the spring of 2010. We have enclosed additional information about this database separately with this newsletter. This project is an excellent opportunity for the social work profession to inform physicians of the wide range of mental health and addictions services provided by qualified social workers. 🌸

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