



Legislative Support Fund

Introduction

The statutory process to regulate counseling across the country is time-consuming, expensive and necessary. As this process unfolds across Canada, CCPA has had many requests to participate in the process both politically and financially.

In May 2007, the CCPA Board of Directors agreed that it needed to grapple with the extent to which CCPA should be involved in provincial initiatives. After a fulsome discussion, it was agreed that a National Legislative Support Fund would be developed. This Fund would provide for matching funding from CCPA **based on funds raised directly from the membership** or through fund-raising efforts.

The Board agreed that the fund would be used to shape legislation being developed provincially in two areas: to influence the interpretation of the legislation and to ensure the protection of the professional standing of counsellors was protected. The CCPA Board of Directors unanimously approved a Legislative Support Fund to help provincial counselling associations in their bid for statutory regulation.

We are asking members to contribute to this Legislative Support Fund. Some of you have already responded and we thank you for your generosity. However, we must vigorously continue our efforts. When dealing with law, policies and government there are many time consuming and very expensive steps before making sure that we have a seat at the discussion table, are heard and ultimately play a key role in influencing legislation.

If you would like to contribute to the fund, please send your cheque to the address listed below. Please make the cheque out to CCPA but clearly mark it "CCPA Legislative Support Fund". You may also call our office at 1-877-765-5565 and donate via credit card. We thank you for your support.

Background

The provinces of Quebec, Ontario, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick have statutory requirements to be a mental health therapist in Canada. Recently, Alberta has passed legislation to create a College of Counselling Therapists. It is anticipated that the Alberta College will open in the fall of 2019. Due to the lack of regulation, people practising in this field do so under many different titles such as counsellor, psychotherapist, counselling therapist, art therapist, clinical counsellor, guidance counsellor, marriage and family therapist, music therapist, drama therapist, pastoral counsellor, substance abuse counsellors etc.

The statutory regulation of counselling has been a much-discussed topic and a much sought after goal in many Canadian provinces for the past 15 years. Many counsellors believe that both the Canadian public and Canadian counsellors have much to gain from the statutory regulation of the profession.

The principal factor cited for statutory regulation is the risk of harm to the public since the practice of counselling or mental health therapy, often takes place in private, unsupervised settings with emotionally vulnerable patients/clients. Two major sources of potential harm to patients/clients have



been identified: the nature of the therapeutic relationship itself and the failure to properly assess or implement specific psychotherapeutic interventions.

Two groups in particular have been identified who pose an increased risk of harm to the public: a) unregulated practitioners in private practice without professional affiliation or supervision, and b) regulated professionals who practice psychotherapy without formal training in psychotherapy. In Canada, the statutory regulation of professions is a provincial matter and each province has undertaken the task in a different manner. Please visit <http://www.ccpa-accp.ca/en/statusofregulation/> for an update on the status of regulation for each province.

The Regulatory Process and CCPA

In recognition of the need to provide public protection and a structure and standards of practice for its members, CCPA established a Code of Ethics, Standards of Practice, an Ethical Complaints Procedure and voluntary certification process for its members in the late 1980s. These steps have resulted in CCPA acting in a manner that is voluntarily, self-regulated.

The statutory regulatory process is time-consuming, expensive and necessary. As this process unfolds across Canada, CCPA has had many requests to participate in the process politically and financially. While there is a necessary and important role for CCPA to play, there has always been tension surrounding the funding of provincial activities.

For example, in British Columbia the B.C. Task Group has developed a set of competencies that have been validated across Canada. CCPA's involvement with this group has always been on the basis of in-kind contributions. CCPA has contributed in-kind by paying for attendance at various meetings, holding a Board meeting in Vancouver in 2005 so that its board members could attend the National Symposium on Counsellor Regulation organized by BCACC, and by validating the B.C. competencies nationally. In Ontario, in order to remain a member of the Ontario Coalition of Mental Health Professionals, CCPA has had to pay membership fees and to contribute toward the Coalition Advocacy Fund. CCPA has financially contributed to the Coalition efforts by a combination of fundraising activities sponsored by the National Capital Region Chapter, the Private Practitioners Chapter, the CCPA Ontario directors, and by raising funds directly by soliciting the Ontario members who will be affected by the legislation. CCPA has also played a leadership role within the Coalition by being a member of the Steering Committee and by acting as the Secretary/Treasurer. This has consumed many volunteer hours primarily donated by the National Office staff.

In May 2007, the CCPA Board of Directors agreed that it needs to grapple with the extent to which CCPA needs to be involved in provincial initiatives. After a fulsome discussion, it was agreed that a National Legislative Support Fund would be developed. This Fund would provide for matching funding from CCPA based on funds raised directly from the membership or through fund-raising efforts such as that of the NCR Chapter. It was agreed that the fund would be used to influence legislation being developed provincially in two areas: to influence the interpretation of the legislation and to ensure that the professional standing of counsellors was protected.



Structure of the Fund

This Legislative Support Fund will provide for **matching** funding from CCPA based on funds raised directly from the membership or through chapter sponsorship or fund-raising efforts. These funds will be clearly identified in the CCPA accounting system as Legislative Support Funds. The monies collected for this fund will be invested in short-term cashable GIC's to maximize their value if the funds are not required.

The start date for the matching funding will be January 2006. That is, all funds that have been donated to legislative issues will be matched by CCPA as of January 2006.

Matching funding is not intended to jeopardize CCPA's ability to operate other projects. CCPA will in each fiscal year cap the amount of matching funds. This decision to cap funds will be made by the Board of Directors and communicated to affected parties in a timely fashion.

Administration of the Fund

The Fund will be administrated through the National Office of CCPA.

All uses of the Legislation Support Fund will be at the direction of the CCPA Board of Directors. Application to the fund for use of the monies will be made through the director(s) of each province. Each application will be considered on its individual merit by the Board of Directors as to its applicability for funding.

The application for the funding should include the following information:

- Name of Group or Individual requesting the funding, including signatures/names of supportive individuals/associations
- Evidence of an organized, cohesive group of individuals committed to legislative action that is in the best interests of clients and counsellors and psychotherapists
- History of activities undertaken prior to application for funding
- Evidence of an existing plan for lobbying, fundraising, and dissemination of information that aligns with the ethics, mission, and services of CCPA
- Evidence of research and/or preparation of background information
- A description of the use of the funds, clearly indicating how the funds will advance the cause of statutory regulation in the province or territory
- Estimate of the funds required
- Time frame of expenditures
- Specific names of individuals or organizations to which the money will be transferred
- Deadline for funding



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Advertising of the Fund

An article will be placed in Cognica and on the website as soon as the fund parameters are approved. After the initial article, each edition of Cognica will have a notice regarding the fund. Each CCPA renewal form will contain a notice of the fund.

When funds are approved for expenditure, an article will be placed in Cognica notifying members of the use of the funds.