

BULLETIN

West Coast LEAF seeks HSA members input on consequences of legal aid cuts on patients and clients

February 2, 2010

In 2004, West Coast Legal Education and Action Fund (LEAF) collaborated with the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) to produce an in-depth study about the effects of cuts to legal aid. *Legal Aid Denied: Women and the Cuts to Legal Services in BC* examined the recent history and cumulative effects of cuts, undermining the health, safety, livelihoods, and families in need of legal assistance.

In 2003, there were 38 legal aid clinics in BC. This was scaled back to just seven offices. This year, these seven will be cut to just two: Vancouver and Terrace. This is just one part of the recent legal service cuts. Other cuts include the elimination of legal services for PovNet (a non-profit poverty network), cancelling a justice centre project in Nanaimo, and greatly diminishing Law Line services.

In light of continued cuts, the authors of *Legal Aid Denied* are working on an update to their original report. LEAF is seeking your input. If you work with patients or clients who have been refused legal aid or were otherwise unable to obtain legal representation, your information may very valuable to the authors of the report. If you have such information ... either data or anecdotes ... **please contact by February 10, 2010:**

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Please circulate this notice to any others in your field who might be able to assist with information.

Delegates to HSAs 2009 convention called on the union to take action to publicize and help gather information about the impact of cuts to legal aid services. This is an excellent opportunity to have our stories heard, collected, and reported.

The 2004 report, *Legal Aid Denied: Women and the Cuts to Legal Services in BC*, is available here:

<http://www.policyalternatives.ca/publications/reports/legal-aid-denied>

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