
For Immediate Release

September 28, 2012

News Release

Law Society to support a new assistance program

Toronto: Effective January 1, 2013, a new confidential assistance program will be in place, funded by the Law Society of Upper Canada with the cooperation of LAWPRO, to provide support to lawyers and paralegals in Ontario who are experiencing a professional or personal crisis. The program will provide confidential peer-to-peer counselling, and offer a number of other services as well.

Since 2006, the Law Society of Upper Canada and LAWPRO have supported lawyers by providing more than \$3 million in funding to the Ontario Lawyers' Assistance Program (OLAP), a lawyer assistance program provider. The Law Society and LAWPRO have funded OLAP because lawyer wellness helps lawyers better serve the public. Both organizations remain fully committed to lawyer wellness.

The Law Society has a fundamental obligation to ensure that members' fees are spent in a fully transparent and accountable manner. In an attempt to move forward positively, discussions have been in progress with OLAP since late 2010. At this time, evolving a program with services for paralegals as well as lawyers is in the best interest of our licensees and their clients. Accordingly, funding for OLAP from the Law Society and LAWPRO will end on December 31 of this year.

By ensuring funding to OLAP until year end, and the opening of the new program on January 1, 2013, Ontario lawyers continue to have access to confidential counselling, EAP referral and distress hotline services.

The new program extends the Law Society's support to paralegals as well as lawyers. The Law Society regulates lawyers and paralegals in Ontario in the public interest. The Law Society has a mandate to protect the public interest, to maintain and advance the cause of justice and the rule of law, to facilitate access to justice for the people of Ontario and act in a timely, open and efficient manner.

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