Adding Insult to Injury – Criminal Injuries Compensation Board

The Ombudsman continues to monitor the implementation of the recommendations he made in his February 2007 report, *Adding Insult to Injury*, to ensure that victims of violent crime and their families receive timely and appropriate services from the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board (CICB).

According to statistics provided to our Office by the board, its once almost insurmountable caseload continues to shrink, thanks to an influx of funding and staff in the years since the Ombudsman’s report. As of March 31, 2010, the CICB’s caseload stood at 5,916, down from 6,650 in January 2009, 8,290 in November 2007 and 9,640 in July 2006. It received an average 336 claims per month in the 2009-2010 fiscal year, about the same as last year (334 cases per month), but it is completing more cases per month – 296 on average, compared to 288 last year. The number of hearings held was down slightly – 3,792 in 2009-2010, compared to 3,859 last year.

The board has completed an upgrade to its case management system and the average processing time for claims, from start to finish, has improved since the Ombudsman’s investigation, when it was three years. However, it has not changed since last year – it still takes almost two years, on average, for a claim to be processed. As well, the average time it takes for a claim to be assigned to an analyst actually increased this year – to 3.6 months from 2.7 months. Ombudsman investigators were advised that this was due to turnover of staff. The Ombudsman will continue to monitor the CICB’s progress in reducing these delays.

In February 2010, the board released its first annual report since the Ombudsman’s 2007 report. It also advised that the Ombudsman’s recommendation that it create an advisory committee of victims, their advocates, and professionals dedicated to serving the needs of victims is still under consideration.

Complaints to the Ombudsman about the CICB have continued to fall, dropping from 192 in 2006-2007 to 50 this past year, about half of which were about delays and poor customer service.

Following receipt of the Ombudsman’s report, the Board launched the first phase of a business transformation project designed to streamline claims processing and to address the large inventory of applications... Currently, average claims processing time from the date a victim files an application until she or he receives the Board’s decision is 27 months. This compares to approximately 32 months for fiscal 2006-07, a reduction of 15%.”

– Criminal Injuries Compensation Board 2007-2009 report