



October 1, 2009

Linda Bonnell
President, Family Mediation Canada
Suite #189-55 Northfield Dr. E.
Waterloo, ON N2K 3T6

Dear Ms. Bonnell;

Re: Your letter dated August 19, 2009

Thank you for your letter of congratulations for our Department's initiatives towards a new and improved service delivery model for family law in New Brunswick.

The New Brunswick Department of Justice and Consumer Affairs has greatly appreciated the collaborative working relationships with Family Mediation Canada in the past and in particular, with the mediator certification pilot project of New Brunswick's Family Court Social Workers in 1998 and their participation in your national conferences over the years.

As you are aware, a Task Force on Access to Family Justice in New Brunswick, led by Mr. Justice Raymond Guérette, tabled its report on family law in June, 2009. The Task Force was mandated to examine timelier access to justice for New Brunswick families. The report outlines 50 recommendations examining three areas for improvement: operations; legislation, rules of court in relation to Family Division matters; and education and information; all of which serve to address the issues that have arisen from the current system. An implementation committee consisting of government officials was struck to review the recommendations, consult with key stakeholders and design a pilot model. Our Department is fortunate to be able to rely upon the expertise of many members of the Task Force implementation committee and in particular that of Michael Guravich, who as you know is a well established advocate of family mediation.

Historically, our Department has had progressive and effective approaches to assisting separated families and continues to include: Family Support Orders Service (FSOS); Parent Education Programs; Court-Ordered Evaluations Support Programs (C-OESP) and a new alternate dispute resolution service called Child Protection Mediation.



Family mediation services form an important component of the new and improved service delivery model for family law in New Brunswick and while I generally agree that it will be necessary to make every effort to engage professionals with advanced training and certification in Family Mediation, it is still too early to discuss which specific qualifications will be required for the position of the Mediator. As you can appreciate, the implementation committee needs to continue to do its work, including bringing other stakeholders to the table.

I thank you again for your letter and assure you that we will continue to work hard to design a new service delivery pilot model which includes well trained and qualified professionals to provide helpful alternatives for families in crises from separation and divorce.

Sincerely,



Hon. Michael B. Murphy, Q.C.
Attorney General and Minister of Justice and Consumer Affairs

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