



BC Association of Social Workers  
#402 – 1755 West Broadway  
Vancouver, BC V6J 4S5

E: [bcasw@bcasw.org](mailto:bcasw@bcasw.org)  
T: 604.730.9111

December 5, 2022  
For immediate release

## CHILDREN'S MINISTRY LAUNCHES SOCIAL WORKERS SURVEY

The BC Association of Social Workers (BCASW) has lobbied the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) for many years to make changes to strengthen the profession of social work and increase protection of the public interest. The BCASW is pleased to see that MCFD has launched a consultation on oversight of social work practice and is asking social workers to comment.

The Social Workers Act created the BC College of Social Workers (BCCSW) and gave it the authority to superintend the practice of social work. The BCCSW creates standards for social work practice and a code of ethics, requires registrants to upgrade skills and knowledge annually, investigates complaints, and holds disciplinary hearings.

The Social Workers Act requires that social workers register with the BCCSW to practice social work and to use the title "social worker".

Unfortunately, MCFD has maintained exemptions in the Social Workers Regulation that permit a wide range of social workers to practice social work without registering and for many individuals to use the title "social worker" without any social work education.

The MCFD survey lists the exemptions this way.

"The Social Workers Regulation sets out several registration exemptions, including exemptions for social workers employed by: Provincial and Federal governments; Municipalities, regional districts or boards of education; First Nations; MCFD and Indigenous Child and Family Service Agencies (ICFSAs); and those who teach or engage in research as social workers."

The BCASW campaign to strengthen professional social work aims to have all exemptions removed. The last time an exemption was removed was in 2013 when social workers employed by health authorities were required to register with the BCCSW.

For those social workers currently required to register with the BCCSW and those who voluntarily register with them, the BCCSW effectively supports the social work profession and social work practice by establishing practice standards and a code of ethics, and by requiring social workers to complete a minimum of 40 hours of professional development annually. Additionally, the BCCSW provides

recipients of social work services an avenue to redress grievances by investigating complaints and disciplining social workers should that be warranted.

Failing to protect title, confuses the public regarding the qualifications of the service provider and undermines trust in the profession. Service recipients, concerned about the services they have received from a social worker, not registered with the BCCSW, have no readily available avenues for redress of their grievances.

MCFD has struggled with social work regulation and ironically, the Minister administers an Act that created a regulatory college aimed at public protection yet exempts her own staff and many social workers working independently or for other employers.

The BCCSW is committed to continually improving the work they do. The BCCSW has established an Indigenous Council, issued several anti-racism statements/practice guides, and is revising and modernizing the code of ethics and standards of practice. The College is reviewing continuing professional development requirements with the goal of setting annual requirements for anti-Indigenous racism and anti-racist learning. The BCCSW actively seeks members from minority groups to run for elected board directors and has a voluntary program allowing members to self-identify as a member of a minority group.

The BCASW is advising social workers to complete the survey and support the campaign to strengthen professional social work and increase protection of the public interest. Social workers may contact BCASW staff at [bcasw@bcasw.org](mailto:bcasw@bcasw.org) with any questions or concerns.

Contact:

Michael Crawford, President  
BC Association of Social Workers  
E: [bcasw@bcasw.org](mailto:bcasw@bcasw.org)  
T: 604.730.9111