

Report of the Complaints Committee
 Psychological Association of Manitoba (PAM)
 Annual General Meeting
 April 2009

The Complaints Committee of PAM is composed of PAM members Drs. Daryl Gill, Jule Henderson, Bill Leonhart, Mary-Jane Robinson, Bruce Tefft, and I as Chair, as well as public representatives Neil Arnason, Chris Summerville and Herb Thompson. Longstanding member Dr. April Phillips retired this year, and we miss her thoughtful contributions to our deliberations. Dr. Henderson joined the Committee in September 2009, and we welcome her fresh perspective to the work of the Committee. Blair Graham, Q.C., and Rob Olsen of Thompson Dorfman Sweatman LLP served as the Committee's legal counsel, and Lorna Leader continued as assistant to the Committee.

During this past year the transition to operating under the new By-laws has concluded, with additional information about the appeal process being integrated in 2008 into the disposition letters sent to complainants. The Committee has utilized the services of the Assistant to the Committee in undertaking fact finding inquiries in a number of complaints, where appointment of an Investigator was not deemed a requirement. As well, in the interest of resource and time efficiencies, the Committee has, where appropriate, used a model of sub-team complaint reviews, prior to consideration of complaints by the Committee as a whole.

Complaint Summary for 2008	2008	2007	2006	2005
Carried Forward (from previous year)	8	15	12	8
New Complaints	6	6	12	13
Total Reviewed	14	21	24	21
Outcome of Committee Review:				
Closed	7	13	9	9
Carried Forward (to next year)	7	8	15	12
Total	14	21	24	21

The Complaints Committee met seven times in 2008. This year marked the completion of most longstanding complaints before the Committee. Of those carried forward into 2009, two dating from 2006 dealing with related matters involving one member, are nearing resolution. The remaining five complaints carried into 2009 were received in 2008.

Of the seven complaints closed in 2008, six were dismissed. One of the six was concluded after an agreement for a period of supervision was negotiated between the Committee and the member. Another of the six was dismissed with an educative letter to the member. A longstanding complaint in which charges of professional misconduct had been brought forward against a member went to hearing in front of Executive Council, pursuant to the former By-Laws. As a result of many issues which arose during protracted proceedings, the prosecution was discontinued. One complaint resulted in charges of professional misconduct and a hearing before a panel of the Inquiry Committee. A guilty plea was entered, and the outcome of the hearing was expulsion of the non-psychologist member.

The trend toward fewer complaints being received continued from 2007 into 2008, with six new complaints being received in each of the last two years. Overall, complaints involve all areas of practice; however, custody and access assessments continue to be a recurring context of complainants. As well, issues and concerns related to cross-jurisdictional practice, including telephone and internet services, has the potential to become an emerging area of concern.

I, along with Mr. Graham and a number of Committee members, participated in the November Town Hall meeting. Of particular interest was the discussion of the ADR Committee report with alternatives to the formal complaint process in streamlining the current complaint process. As Chair, I have continued to collaborate with the Registrar and Executive Council with respect to broader regulatory issues that relate to complaint and disciplinary issues.

As always, appreciation and “thank-you’s” are due to many. The Committee was again assisted in its work by the generous support of the membership acting as investigators, consultants and supervisors. On behalf of the Committee, I thank Drs. Jane Bow, Michael Stambrook and Craig Turner for their recent contributions. As always, thank-you to Mr. Blair Graham for his ongoing support and guidance to the Committee, to my psychologist and public member colleagues on the Complaints Committee who conscientiously and generously give their time and expertise to this important function, and to the PAM membership and the public, for addressing important psychology practice issues.

Respectfully submitted,

Jaye Miles, Ph.D., C. Psych.
Chair, Complaints Committee

