

Communiqué

2025 EDITION - Lawyers and Well-Being

IN THIS ISSUE

WELL-BEING

President's Message	2
CEO Message	4
Manitoba Blue Cross	5
Resilience in the Fire Zone: A Northern Perspective on Well-Being	6
Law(yer) Strong	8
Health Recovery Program	9
The Well-Being Benefits of Giving Back	10
CPD to Support Well-Being	11
Remember to Laugh	12

REGULAR LAW SOCIETY NEWS

NEWS

Bencher Meeting Highlights	14
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EDUCATION

16

NOTICES

17

RESOURCES

19

Welcome to the 5th special edition of the Communiqué dedicated to **Well-Being**.

The theme of 2025 World Mental Health Day is *"Access to Services: Mental Health in Catastrophes and Emergencies"*.

Our Northern colleagues have experienced a particularly catastrophic summer of wildfires. In this issue we hear from one lawyer's experience navigating this disaster and how she tended to her own mental health through that intense time.

What works for you - in times of relative calm or in times that test you - is personal. This issue and [past Well-Being editions](#) offer ideas and practices for your consideration.

Take care everyone.



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

KYLE DEAR

I listen to a lot of podcasts about nutrition, health, and well-being, which are full of interesting ideas and suggestions for feeling better. I help myself to a lot of self-help resources. But the truth is that there are so many things that we could be doing to be healthier and happier that it can feel overwhelming. Sometimes it feels like those health and well-being recommendations and fitness tips only serve to add to our already overly busy to-do lists.

Often when we add in new habits like resistance training or cold plunges or meditation, we will be enthusiastic and disciplined about implementing them for a while... until a busy month like September rolls around and we just can't seem to fit them in anymore.

So instead of chasing the latest aspirational happiness trend, I wanted to share with you (and remind myself of) three simple things that we can all add into our workweeks that can genuinely make us feel a little happier (or at least a little less stressed).

1. The first is simple: **go for a walk, if you are able**. Stepping away from your desk, even for a few minutes, can clear your head and reset your focus. And if walking isn't an option, just pausing to take a few slow, deep breaths can have a similar effect, helping you reset and return to your work with fresh energy.
2. Another habit is to **get outside**. We spend so much time indoors that we forget how much a little fresh air and exposure to nature can boost us. Whether it's a quick break on a busy day or a longer outing to enjoy Manitoba's seasons and scenery, time outdoors is a reminder that there's life beyond the four walls of our work.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT continued...

3. And perhaps most important: **spend time with friends and colleagues.**

The practice of law can sometimes feel isolating, and it's easy to put social connections on hold (or aside) for work. But time with friends, be it a dinner, a phone call, or even a funny text exchange, can significantly recharge us and improve our resiliency.

In this 5th annual well-being issue of the *Communiqué*, you will find more tips and resources from wiser people than me about how to prioritize wellness in the workplace and how to improve your overall mental health. From practical strategies to personal reflections, I hope that you will discover something that resonates with you and helps you feel supported in both your professional and personal life. The Law Society is committed to supporting the well-being of our members, and I encourage you to take advantage of the resources available.

Take good care, and please let us know if you need anything.





CEO'S REPORT

LEAH KOSOKOWSKY

Since 2022, the Law Society has made the well-being of the profession a strategic priority and our commitment continues in the 2025–2028 Strategic Plan. What does that mean to you? We have read and reread Phase II of the National Wellness Study which includes specific recommendations for the Law Society of Manitoba. You will find that our strategic activities are intended to address those recommendations, namely:

- focusing on risk factors that compromise the mental and physical health of lawyers;
- setting up actions to better support lawyers in dealing with emotional demands; and
- developing a culture of measurement.

In addition, and keeping with the World Mental Health Day theme, the Law Society is keen to support the profession's well-being in times of emergency or catastrophe, such as the extensive impact of this summer's wildfires on those living and practising in northern Manitoba.

If you identify areas of need where the Law Society may provide assistance, please reach out to me. We want to support you.



ACCESS *Care* WHEN LIFE FEELS OVERWHELMING



October 10, 2025 marks World Mental Health Day. This year's theme: ***Access to Services: Mental Health in Catastrophes and Emergencies*** - is a reminder that life can change in an instant, and that support should never feel out of reach.

Here in Manitoba, crises can take many forms - from floods, accidents and wildfires to community tragedies and personal struggles. Your **Employee or Individual Assistance Program coverage** ensures help is close at hand, including:

- **Confidential counselling** for stress, grief, trauma and more. (If reaching out feels daunting, **this article** on what to expect during a counselling session provides a gentle look at the process.)
- **Internet-based cognitive behavioural therapy (iCBT)** with MindBeacon, offering therapist-guided or self-guided virtual therapy you can access anytime, anywhere.
- Helpful **articles**, resources and other mental health supports on the Manitoba Blue Cross **Wellness Platform**.

These tools and resources are here for you and for those covered under your plan. When life takes an unexpected turn, help is always here.

Find Support Today

RESILIENCE IN THE FIRE ZONE: *A Northern Perspective on Well-Being*

JUDY EAGLE, BA, LL.B.



October is Mental Health Awareness Month, but in my world, that focus has been front and center since May, all through the summer and well into fall. As a former therapeutic counsellor, currently a practising lawyer (also a counsellor) and an elected City of Flin Flon Councillor, I know first-hand that facing the level six wildland fires that surrounded our community has been a true test of mental health and well-being.

Flin Flon itself is 5,000 people and serves over 22,000 people from surrounding areas coming from both sides of the provincial line. Following the evacuation alert in May, Council pronounced a local state of emergency on May 28 which set in motion the mandatory evacuation by midnight. There was no way to know then that evacuation would be four weeks to June 25.

With our local team of Council members, RCMP, COs and Fire Chief to commandeer buses and drivers, 600 vulnerable people were transported to safety in other communities. On May 30, our Fire Chief ordered us out of the community under our protests, but 'mandatory' meant exactly that.

RESILIENCE IN THE FIRE ZONE:

A Northern Perspective on Well-Being continued...

By June 1, our female Deputy Mayor and I had convinced the Unified Command Team (specialized wildland fighters from all over the world) that we and four specific others must return. And so began June's 16-hour days with my continuing to field forwarded Manitoba 211 calls; four of us cooked for and fed 175 firefighters the first few days back with two refrigerator trucks and 'breaking into' the Co-Op for food; then picking up food and serving 250 fighters three times a day after a local restaurant's allowed return with a skeleton staff; my receiving calls from evacuees to schedule the 70+ pet wellness checks/feeding in homes as well the dozen or so dogs running the streets; multiple daily meetings with Unified Command and sister communities; and then myself coordinating the early re-entry of essential businesses with their skeleton staff who would only then be allowed through the Manitoba and Saskatchewan road blocks.

Flin Flon was literally surrounded by wildfire – seen each night in the sky in any direction; smoke so thick in the daytime that it seemed dark, yet it was a nuclear waste gold colour; charred chunks falling from the sky; a completely deserted community; no ER or hospital; and if ordered to muster on a few moments' notice kept, us all watchful.

I summarize my experience to highlight what this kind of disaster demands as thankfully most of us will not have to deal with this. And for so very many who were evacuated, the combination of psychological, physical and financial stress can be overwhelming.

Only due to the global, provincial and local firefighters' human intervention is Flin Flon still standing. No loss of structures and no loss of human life. To see all those firefighters operating day after day, coordinating and cooperating in the effort without complaint is instructive. The wildland fire teams are still in northern Manitoba not far from here, as the forest is still burning.

Was it stressful? Most definitely!! Maybe having every waking moment filled was helpful, except subconscious problem-solving detracted from restful overnights the first while. My own practice of positive self-talk and meditation served well and it is not an emptying of the mind in case anyone wonders. Installed on my phone is "**Calm**" and I can testify that the application has many useful features. And I trusted that I could contact [Law\(yer\) Strong](#) for outside support from peers as I am a volunteer counselling member in that program. I absolutely would have done so if needed. Although unsought and disruptive, stress can be instructive when addressed – I strongly encourage it.





Lawyerstrong-mb.ca
support@lawyerstrong-mb.ca

You are not alone

Law(yer) Strong Peer Support Program for Manitoba Legal Profession offers:

- Confidential support
- Peer Support - over 90 caring peer volunteers in the legal profession
- Information about mental health and addiction resources
- An empathetic, non-judgmental ear
- Attorney Alliance, a closed AA group for legal community
- Well-being mental health education
- Mentorship and community



Need to Talk? Support Is Available

- **9-8-8** Mental Health & Suicide Crisis Line (24/7)
- **Manitoba Blue Cross EAP** – www2.mb.bluecross.ca
- **Attorney Alliance** (AA group for legal community):
aa.attorney.alliance@gmail.com
- **Klinic Crisis Line:** 204-786-8686 | 1-888-322-3019

The Health Recovery Program



[The Health Recovery Program](#) first launched in December 2022. It is a healthcare treatment option for lawyers experiencing health issues such as addiction, depression, or other mental health conditions.



This treatment is:

- An option for lawyers whose health condition is impacting their competence to practice or related to complaints or discipline proceedings
- Completely voluntary
- Confidential
- Includes almost immediate access to a psychiatrist
- Often without any cost as Manitoba Health has covered costs thus far

What we commonly hear from those participating in *The Health Recovery Program* is that treatment not only improved their professional situation, but also improved many aspects of their personal life and relationships.

Lawyers do not need to be facing discipline in order to use the resources of the program.

Please reach out to Rennie Stonyk at rstonyk@lawsociety.mb.ca if you have any questions about the Health Recovery Program.

The Well-Being Benefits of Giving Back

Volunteering offers more than an opportunity to serve others – it's also a proven way to enhance personal well-being. Studies consistently show that [acts of service boost mood, improve empathy, and even enhance overall life satisfaction.](#)

Whether it's reading with children, supporting families during difficult times, or lending your expertise in a crisis, giving back reminds us of the positive impact we can make beyond our daily workload.

Giving back triggers the brain's reward centers, which release feel-good hormones like oxytocin, dopamine, and serotonin. This creates a "[helper's high](#)" that can boost your mood and decrease feelings of anxiety and depression.



The upcoming holiday season offers many opportunities to contribute. Volunteering during the holidays is often a more intimate and joyful experience. The wellness rewards here are centered on connection, gratitude and spreading cheer.



Looking for a place to plug in?

If you're looking for a meaningful opportunity, Lawyers for Literacy is coming up on March 14, 2026. Many kids do not have an adult at home who reads to them. It's a great way to invest into a child's future and share the joy of reading with them.



CPD to Support Well-Being

We know well-being is a critical factor for your success.

That's why we work toward integrating it into our CPD programs.

We also encourage you to check out these on demand options focused on well-being.

An Introduction to the Mindful Business Charter (MBC)



This movement of law firms and their clients aims to reduce unnecessary stressors in the workplace. Learn how the concepts can be applied to yours.

Sleep



Breaking the Cycle of Stress and Poor Sleep



Sleep and Your Wellness



Where Does the Practice of Law Fit Into Your Life?



Financial Fitness for a wHealthy Retirement

Life Beyond Law



How to Beat Procrastination



Time & Distraction Management

Productivity

More resources available here:



Health & Wellness Resources Library

The benefits of smiling & laughter

FOR A POSITIVE MINDSET

IMPROVES MOOD

Smiling and laughing can trigger the release of endorphins, the body's natural mood-boosting chemicals.

REDUCES STRESS

Laughing and smiling can reduce the levels of stress hormones in the body, reducing stress and promoting relaxation

INCREASES POSITIVITY

Smiling and laughter can improve overall mood and promote a more positive outlook on life.

BOOSTS IMMUNE SYSTEM

Laughter has been shown to increase the production of antibodies, strengthening the immune system and improving overall health.

ENHANCES RELATIONSHIPS

Smiling and laughter can help to build rapport and strengthen relationships with others.

INCREASES CREATIVITY

Smiling and laughter have been shown to increase creativity and problem-solving abilities.

PROMOTES PHYSICAL HEALTH

Laughing has been shown to improve breathing, reduce blood pressure, and stimulate circulation, promoting overall physical health.



Remember
TO LAUGH



The image shows a multi-level office space. In the foreground, a staircase with light-colored wooden steps and a dark metal railing leads down. In the background, a conference room is visible through a glass partition, featuring a long table and several chairs. The room is lit by two large, white, dome-shaped pendant lights. A semi-transparent text box is overlaid on the upper part of the image.

Read on for Your Regular Law Society Notices

Winnipeg Room

BENCHER MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

LEAH KOSOKOWSKY, Chief Executive Officer

The benchers travelled to beautiful Clear Lake for their annual fall meeting, held on September 4, 2025 in conjunction with the Western Bar Association CPD and events. Taking advantage of the additional time together, the benchers participated in a board governance workshop led by Michael Anderson of Tecker International, LLC. While we were very pleased to have received the observation that we have a high functioning board, such a tune up is important to remain effective and it generates ideas for how we might improve on our performance.

In the spring, the benchers had finalized the 2025–2028 Strategic Plan which included amendments to the Law Society's mission statement as well as revisions and additions to the “ends” of the organization. Those changes were formally adopted into the benchers' Governance Policies at the September meeting.

The Law Society has a number of initiatives underway and the benchers received briefings on the progress of the Rule of Law Education Campaign, the Access to Justice Centre project and the implementation plan for the Western Canada Competency Profile.

We were also pleased to provide reports on a very positive pension plan valuation conducted by our actuaries and an equally positive report regarding the performance of Manitoba students in CPLED's PREP program.

Finally, the benchers received a monitoring report on the Admissions and Membership Department which noted the myriad changes underway to improve students' and lawyers' experience with forms and processes, as well as communications with the Fair Registration in Regulated Professions Office regarding the language assessments conducted for internationally trained lawyers seeking to practice in Canada.



Access to Justice Week

10 Years Forward: Expanding Justice, Embracing Inclusion

October 27 - 31, 2025

Presented In Partnership by:



THE MANITOBA
BAR ASSOCIATION
A Branch of the
Canadian Bar Association



University
of Manitoba

Faculty of Law

The Law Society of Manitoba is once again pleased to partner with the Manitoba Bar Association and the University of Manitoba to celebrate National Access to Justice Week. Together, we're offering four free and engaging virtual events open to everyone.

On **Tuesday, October 28**, the Law Society will host a session titled [AI and Access to Justice: Promise, Pitfalls, and Practice](#) with moderator, John Burchill, Executive Director of the Manitoba Law Reform Commission.

LEARN MORE

PREP IMPORTANT DATES

	Accelerated PREP 2025	Standard PREP 2025
PHASE THREE: Complete assignments Virtual Law Firm	COMPLETED	September 12, 2025 to January 23, 2026
DEADLINE TO PAY Final Tuition Instalment	COMPLETED	January 12, 2026
CAPSTONE COMPLETED	COMPLETED	February 2, 2026 to February 11, 2026
Results	6 weeks after Capstone completed	6 weeks after Capstone completed

Workplaces should not be assigning any duties whatsoever to students which may compromise their ability to successfully complete the required activities in the two week Capstone period applicable to their PREP intake.

Further, students enrolled in Standard PREP must be given time as may be required to prepare the assignments which are submitted throughout Phase 3.

FALL PILOT ACCELERATED PROGRAM

The fall Accelerated Pilot schedule can be found [here](#).



2026

MASS CALL TO THE BAR CEREMONY

The 2026 Mass Call to the Bar Ceremony is scheduled to take place at the RBC Convention Centre on **Friday, June 19, 2026** at 9:00 am.

**For those eligible to be called to the Bar in late 2025,
a Call ceremony will be scheduled and you will be notified**

NOTICE OF BENCHERS' MEETING



The next regular meeting of the benchers of the Law Society of Manitoba will be held on:



Thursday, October 30, 2025



**The Law Society offices
and via videoconference**



12:30 p.m.

Members of the Law Society are encouraged to attend and participate in the deliberations of the governing body.



If you wish to attend a meeting via videoconference, please contact Pat Bourbonnais at pbourbonnais@lawsociety.mb.ca.

Dates for the next meetings are as follows:

- December 11, 2025
- February 5, 2026
- March 19, 2026
- May 14, 2026
- June 18, 2026

Agenda and meeting minutes are published on the website [here](#).

IN MEMORIAM

Morris Harvey Smeltz, KC, who passed away on May 6, 2025 at the age of 80. Mr. Smeltz received his call to the Bar on June 26, 1968. He practised in Virden and Melita, Manitoba for 14 years before relocating to Alberta where he continued to practise until 2024. Mr. Smeltz was appointed King's Counsel in 1980.

James McLaren Halley, KC, who passed away on May 18, 2025 at the age of 89. Mr. Halley received his call to the Bar on June 6, 1966. He was a practising member of the Law Society for four years before relocating to British Columbia in 1970, where he continued to practise until 2011. Mr. Halley was appointed King's Counsel in 1986.

Walter Thiessen, who passed away on June 27, 2025 at the age of 86. Mr. Thiessen received his call to the Bar on June 26, 1973. He served as counsel to the Attorney General's Department and the Canadian Wheat Board before joining Falk Thiessen Warkentin in 1977. In 1983 he moved to Pitblado & Hoskin and then joined D'Arcy and Deacon LLP in 1998, where he practised up to the date of his death.

MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

[Member Forms Available Here](#)



Practising to Non-Practising:

Aug 2, 2025	Erica D. Thompson
Aug. 2, 2025	Andrew P.C. Sieklicki
Aug. 18, 2025	Dima Alkrzoun
Aug. 24, 2025	Kelsey M. Yakimoski
Sept. 1, 2025	Melissa L. Wall
Sept. 1, 2025	Benjamin P. Leahy
Sept. 1 2025	Sonia E. Kelly
Sept. 2, 2025	Natalie S. Binguis
Sept. 5, 2025	Carolina Arjona
Sept. 9, 2025	Giovana Hessman Dall"Acqua
Sept. 12, 2025	Tamunobeleva Adegbite
Sept. 16, 2025	Donald G. Douglas
Sept. 20, 2025	Patricia G. Benham
Sept. 30, 2025	Alexander Barnes
Oct. 1, 2025	Jennifer A.F. Guiboche
Oct. 8, 2025	Kathryn E. Hart
Oct. 9, 2025	Eric S. Fleming
Oct. 10, 2025	Joanna H. Kostiuk
Oct. 11, 2025	James G. Carter
Oct. 13, 2025	S. Elsa Falkenberg

Non-Practising to Practising:

Aug. 5, 2025	Tyson C. Priebe
Aug. 5, 2025	Georgia Q.W. DeFehr
Aug. 5, 2025	Matthew J. Reimer
Aug. 18, 2025	Leif R. Jensen
Sept. 2, 2025	Monica U. Turner
Sept. 2, 2025	Ronald P. Toews
Sept. 2, 2025	Marni A. Yakimoski
Sept. 2, 2025	Melissa A. Hazelton
Sept. 22, 2025	Clare M. Brackley
Oct. 1, 2025	Andrew J. Synyshyn
Oct. 6, 2025	Julie B. Winter
Oct. 6, 2025	Taylor A. Antonchuk
Oct. 6, 2025	Geoffrey L. Mackwood
Oct. 8, 2025	Chris J. Curtis
Oct. 14, 2025	Anna K. Solmundson-Birch
Oct. 14, 2025	Ufuoma L. Idiodemise
Oct. 14, 2025	Junaid S. Bakshi
Oct. 15, 2025	Keza D. Uwitonze
Oct. 15, 2025	Raven S.H. Richards
Oct. 16, 2025	Jenna E. Goderis

New Admissions:

Aug. 11, 2025	Areeg Bhalli
Aug. 15, 2025	Kranti Chopra
Aug. 29, 2025	Dhruv Gupta
Sept. 1, 2025	Evan H.W. Lay
Sept. 8, 2025	Matthew J. London
Sept. 8, 2025	Sarah T. Itamunoala
Sept. 15, 2025	Marlena A. Bova
Sept. 22, 2025	Farzad Balandari
Oct. 1, 2025	Kikelomo B. Odeyemi
Oct. 1, 2025	Husanpreet Singh Gill
Oct. 1, 2025	Wafa A. Khan

Oct. 6, 2025	Junaid S. Bakshi
Oct. 8, 2025	Isabel M. Brodt
Oct. 10, 2025	Olamide O. Adeshoye
Oct. 14, 2025	Nicole B. Jowett
Oct. 14, 2025	Shanelle E. Dover
Oct. 15, 2025	Brandon C. Leverick
Oct. 15, 2025	Adedayo J. Adamolekun
Oct. 15, 2025	Adebola O. Adesanya

Suspended to Practising:

Sept. 4, 2025	Jack E. Grieves
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Pitblado Lectures



November 6, 2025



Hybrid Event

Exploring the Rule of Law in Uncertain Times

Join us to reflect on the critical role you play.

- Hear from experts on current issues, public perceptions, and media influences shaping trust in Canada's legal system.
- Gain tools and connections to foster meaningful dialogue and strengthen your practice in upholding the rule of law.

Register



**The Law Society
of Manitoba**

INCORPORATED 1877 | INCORPORÉ EN 1877



THE MANITOBA BAR ASSOCIATION

L'ASSOCIATION DU BARREAU DU MANITOBA

A Branch of the Canadian Bar Association

Une division de l'Association du Barreau canadien



**University
of Manitoba**

Faculty of Law



Featuring a diverse slate of
presenters providing Canadian
and Manitoban perspectives.



Programs



Real Estate Trust Conditions

October 23 | 12:00 – 1:30 p.m. | Webinar

Register



AI and Access to Justice

Promise, Pitfalls, and Practice

October 28 | 12:00 – 1:30 p.m. | Webinar

Register



Pitblado Lectures

Exploring the Rule of Law in Uncertain Times

November 6 | 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. | Hybrid

Register



Hot Topics in Real Estate

In-person and webinar sessions available

December 4 | 1:00 – 4:00 p.m. | In-person

Register

December 5 | 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. | Webinar

Register



Upcoming IMPORTANT DATES At a Glance

— 2025 —

OCTOBER 30
BENCHER MEETING
12:30 p.m.

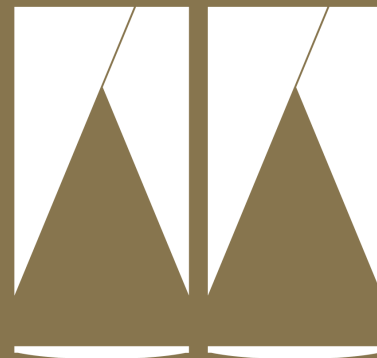
DECEMBER 1

PAYMENT DUE:
2025-2026 Professional Liability Claims Fund
(2nd Installment)
for lawyers paying by instalment

DECEMBER 11
BENCHER MEETING
12:30 p.m.

DECEMBER 31

DUE DATE:
MCPD Hours to be completed
(PLEASE NOTE: This is NOT the reporting deadline.
The deadline to report these hours is April 1st.)



PRESIDENT
Kyle Dear

VICE PRESIDENT
Ken Mandzuik, KC

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
Leah Kosokowsky

DEPUTY CEO
Rennie Stonyk

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