Achieving Work/Life Balance

BACKGROUND

- CBA members consistently report that one of the greatest challenges facing lawyers today is trying to find a way to earn a living while maintaining a reasonable personal and family life. In fact, "work/life balance" is the top concern CBA members have identified through the Association's various membership surveys.

CURRENT STATUS

- In January 2002, an *EPIIgram* entitled *Work-Life Conflict - Achieving balance is a challenge for lawyers,* was published. The *EPIIgram* included an interactive survey component.
- The work-life conflict survey elicited unprecedented response, including appreciation to the CBA for having addressed the matter, and requests for feedback and follow-up.
- A follow-up *EPIIgram* which reported on member views and expectations regarding work-life balance, was published as the September/October 2002 *EPIIgram*.
- The November 2003 *EPIIgram* reported on a law firm survey conducted by Catalyst Canada. That survey identified current practices of mid to large size law firms targeted at retaining lawyers who are seeking better harmonization between their work and personal lives. This survey lead to the creation for law firms of the business case for flexible or alternative work arrangements, and other strategies to address the needs and expectations of the group of lawyers. The survey was published by Catalyst Canada in April 2005.
- The April 2005 *EPIIgram*, entitled "The Real Cost of Losing Talent", presented the findings of the Catalyst Canada survey to CBA members and offered strategies on how firms might retain legal talent.
- In Fall 2007, the Young Lawyers-CBA identified "work-life balance" as one of four priorities for action. CBA allocated funding to begin an initiative on work-life balance, and research was undertaken in 2009 with young lawyer and law firm communities as key informants.
- The Young Lawyers Barometer initiative lead to the development of a Work-Life Balance Toolkit. This online resource centre with an inventory of work-life balance resources on cba.org.
- The Work-Life Balance Toolkit is linked to the Equality Committee's RARE Finds Project site. A growing body of research, shows that work-life balance concerns are often linked to diversity, equality and specifically the attrition of women from the legal profession. In tandem, these web resources provide information and links to resources. They also inspire through profiles of lawyers surmounting systemic barriers to their continued success.

NEXT STEPS

- The Work-Life Balance Toolkit and the RARE Finds Project continue to be refined with new resources added on an ongoing basis.