

2022

Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth (MACY)

Recommendations Action Planning (RAP)
Committee Response to MACY

High Level Summary

In June 2021, the Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth (MACY) Recommendations Action Planning Deputy Minister Committee provided detailed responses on progress made since 2021 to the 66 recommendations directed at Manitoba (an additional two recommendations were directed to the Government of Canada and two at the CFS Authorities) from 10 reports released after October 2018.

MACY released an 11th report with recommendations in June 2022. According to MACY's process, these recommendations will be first reported on by the Province in 2023.

The process used by MACY to require provincial government submissions, their evaluation, scoring and tracking is based on a model from the European Union.

This document provides a high-level summary of the detailed submissions provided to MACY in June 2022 as part of their annual submission process.

The material submitted represented work between June 2021 and 2022. The actions undertaken in previous years can be found in the provincial submissions made in 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022 available on this site.

Over the past year, government departments worked with community stakeholders and continued to make progress on recommendations made by the Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth. Main themes of the work undertaken are outlined below, separated by departments. More details on these or on specific recommendations are available.

Manitoba Education:

The following recommendations for Education and Early Childhood Learning have been assessed as fully compliant:

Boys Report 2: Continue work on an Indigenous Inclusion Strategy in schools, in collaboration with school divisions

Circling Star 2: Conduct a review and develop a province wide strategy to limit exclusionary practices

Matthew 2: Develop a province-wide strategy to limit, reduce and phase out exclusionary practices

Tina Fontaine 1: Review measurement of absenteeism, suspensions, expulsions and create a province-wide strategy to address issues

Matthew 1: Highlight and promote provincial learning objectives focusing on mental health literacy and well-being coping skills

Matthew 3: Continue promoting the Safe and Caring Schools: A Whole School Approach to Planning for Safety and Belonging in School Division, all schools in Manitoba should be implementing the optional tools

The department is committed to fully addressing the following recommendation that has been currently assessed as Partially Compliant:

Finding the Way Back: An Aggregate Investigation of 45 Boys Who Died by Suicide or Homicide in Manitoba

Recommendation Three:

The Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth recommends the Department of Education, in consultation with school divisions and relevant stakeholders, demonstrate the development or continuation of sustainable initiatives in anti-racist education generally, and anti-Indigenous racism specifically, for all students, administrators, teachers, and support staff in Manitoba schools to enhance understanding of racism in education with a view to eradicate inequities and system barriers.

Department progress to date:

- A steering committee for a provincial anti-racism policy is in place, which has developed a project charter and timeline. Part of the project work plan is to identify 12-15 intersectional champions of anti-racism and intersectional issues in Manitoba to assist in development of a draft policy and action plan.
- The provincial curriculum is currently under review in line with the *K-12 Education Action Plan*. It is intended that the Global Competencies framework will be embedded in the curriculum, which has anti-racism as a concept in the Global Competency definitions.
- It is the intention for the steering committee to issue a policy directive and action plan. The work plan identifies a tentative release of this directive in Fall 2023.

Manitoba Families:

Modernization of Child and Family Services Practice Standards

The project to streamline and modernize CFS practice standards made considerable progress in the year since the last reporting to MACY. Phases 1 and 2 of modernization have been completed. This included working with the 4 CFS Authorities to review all existing standards. During this phase redundancies and outdated information were removed and some information was updated to ensure links and references were accurate, and to incorporate some of the specific easily (the areas specific to other MACY recommendations are addressed below). Current standards have been condensed.

In 2020, the Child and Youth Services Division undertook work with the four Child and Family Services (CFS) Authorities to modernize CFS practice standards. Existing standards will be modernized to ensure they reflect current day leading practices and are more user friendly for CFS staff including front line workers.

A number of separate recommendations from MACY are respecting standards and are being addressed through this process. Some are now complete or nearing completion, and others will be addressed in Phase 3 of this project. This includes:

- Circling Star, Recommendation 6

- Angel's Story, Recommendation 4
- Tina Fontaine, Recommendation 5
- Infant Sleep Conditions, Recommendations 12 and 13

Enhanced Training

Several new training projects were provided during the year.

Funding provided to Clan Mothers was used to develop a series of videos to educate about ceremonies and teachings about healing after sexual exploitation.

Funding was provided to develop training on sexual exploitation to child welfare sector staff, and specifically for hotel industry staff.

Training was provided to child welfare agency staff in the areas of missing children, and safe infant sleep.

A new pilot training program was developed in Abuse Investigations, training has been provided already to many front line CFS staff and the training roll out plan is well underway.

Manitoba Families provides training to all staff (and as a required course for certain front line department positions) on trauma and the history of colonization and racism. Training on colonization and reconciliation is available to all provincial staff through the Civil Service Commission. Each individual department and multiple worksites provide additional and training related to this that is tailored to the specific field of work; and many professionals working in these areas have themselves received training in these issues through that qualification (ex. social workers, psychologists, psychiatrists, nurses, teachers, etc.).

A number of recommendations from MACY are respecting training and are being addressed through this work including:

- Circling Star, Recommendation 6
- Angel's Story, Recommendations 1, 2, 3 and 4
- Female Youth Suicide Aggregate, Recommendation 3
- Maltreatment Under age 5, Recommendations 1, 5

Tracia's Trust Strategy and Work to Support Sexually Exploited Youths

The Tracia's Trust Strategy is the strategy working across government to respond to the issue of sexual exploitation of youth. The strategy is led by Manitoba Families and includes initiatives in the areas of prevention, intervention, legislation, coordination, research and evaluation.

Information has been previously provided on the expansion and enhancement of supports for youth through StreetReach, a new treatment facility for sexually exploited youths run by Neecheewam, as well as other new Indigenous led healing supports through Clan Mothers. Significant new funding has been provided to Clan Mothers to build a healing village.

It is noted that MACY recommended secure (locked) placements for at risk youths. Consultation with Indigenous community leaders, other partners and stakeholders including MACY, indicated a voluntary treatment model was more appropriate.

Public awareness campaigns on the issue of online sexual exploitation continue to be funded, including a campaign by Clan Mothers in all of Manitoba's Indigenous languages. Funding was also provided to the Canadian Centre for Child Protection and the Joy Smith Foundation.

The work of the regional teams continues to lead outreach and awareness in communities across Manitoba, and the enhanced and expanded work of the StreetReach programs in Winnipeg and Thompson helps youth find safety and are literally saving lives with crisis interventions.

A new Safe Ride program to assist sexually exploited youths return to safe placements was launched and is seeing strong uptake. A new missing children protocol was implemented exactly as outlined by MACY and is in place. The department is tracking compliance and is working with Authorities and agencies to enhance training and improve adherence.

New legislation was introduced which enhances the ability of hotels to identify trafficking and exploitation, and to improve tracking and documentation to support law enforcement and child protection interventions.

The interdepartmental Gender Based Violence Committee of Cabinet has assumed oversight of the Tracia's Trust Strategy. This will support ensuring work done across government is consistent and aligned with provincial and national work. This whole-of-government approach along with the continued engagement of community will be used to guide next steps and developments for the strategy.

A number of recommendations from MACY relate to the need to address sexual exploitation and are being addressed through this work including:

- Angel's Story, Recommendations 2, and 3
- Tina Fontaine, Recommendations 4 and 5

Child welfare transformation and New Initiatives

Child welfare transformation has taken a number of significant steps which address many of the recommendations made by Macy.

Manitoba passed the first legislative amendments in Canada to support the creation of new child welfare agencies operating under Indigenous Governing Bodies enabled through federal legislation. The first such agency in Manitoba was Peguis CFS, which began to provide services under their own legislation in spring 2022. Manitoba has worked with Peguis CFS to ensure adequate funding from the Province, coordinated case transfers as required by this change, and enabled the new agency to access

provincial records. Discussions are actively underway as more Indigenous Governing Bodies are close to operationalizing their agencies.

Manitoba Families has created a new Indigenous Governing Bodies Support Branch to provide dedicated resources to this historical and important work. Further discussions are underway with partners and stakeholders to identify what other changes might need to take place to enable this work.

Manitoba is actively working with MACY on drafting new regulations that will bring into force the final portion of the Advocate for Children and Youth Act for serious reporting across reviewable services. This expands the ability of MACY to advocate, analyze and make recommendations to help improve children's lives.

A new parenting resource for Indigenous families for children 6-12 years was created and released in 2021, along with the rerelease of a resource for children 0 – 5 years. Parent Child Coalitions continue to be funded and provided services for families across Manitoba, along with many other parenting support programs to help families including those identified to have high vulnerabilities. In April 2022, Manitoba announced new annual funding to supportive housing for reunification of families where children had been in CFS care. New infant and preschooler parenting resources are supported through Red River College Polytech's Science of Early Childhood Development living textbook and a pilot program providing easily accessed parenting information to new parents.

Manitoba entered an agreement with the federal government to improve access to quality early child care services across the province.

Support is provided for low income families to purchase needed supplies, such as cribs, through the Healthy Baby Benefit, specific Employment and Income Assistance funding, the Manitoba Child Benefit, as well as other supported community organizations. All public health nurses and CFS staff are required to offer help to families to obtain a safe sleeping surface for their infant if they do not have one, and to share information about safe infant sleeping with families.

Single Envelope Funding for CFS Authorities, which started in 2019, provides block funding which enables Authorities and agencies to have greater say over how their funding is used. This is already showing results with lower numbers of children in care, and agencies are engaging innovative prevention and therapeutic supports to improve outcomes, like partnering with mental health and addictions services and new forms of therapy.

This work supported action on many recommendations from MACY including:

- Angel's Story 1
- Matthew report 8
- Safe Sleep 1
- Maltreatment Under Age 5 years 1 (Phoenix Sinclair Inquiry Recommendations), 2, and 5
- Male Suicide/ Homicide report 1

BRIDGING THE GAPS: ACHIEVING SUBSTANTIVE EQUALITY FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES IN MANITOBA

Continuum of Respite and Support Services

The Department of Families has introduced two pilots to develop a continuum of respite and support services. Both of these services are intended to reduce the need for Child and Family Services (CFS) involvement for parents raising a child with disabilities by providing immediate relief for parents who are chronically exhausted from the exceptionally high care needs of their child with a disability.

The two-year pilot delivered by St. Amant includes two overnight respite homes - a three-bed home in Winnipeg and a three-bed home in Brandon. The pilot is available for children ages 10 to 17 open to CDS and their families, who are experiencing unmanageable challenges related to the exceptionally high care needs of their child that cannot be safely managed by other available supports.

This service will also provide families with a range of supports to address the source and effects of the persistent challenges to improve their circumstances. The interdisciplinary team consists of a social worker, occupational therapist, counsellor, behaviour analyst, psychology technician and NVCI trainer/safety technician. Support services include intensive case management, advocacy, systems navigation, counselling (trauma-informed and with an understanding of the impact of disability), behavioural services and training on de-escalation and physical safety strategies for families.

The second pilot is the Bridge Program Pilot Project, which will support families who are no longer able to provide full time care due to the complexity of their child's exceptional care requirements. The two-year pilot delivered by New Directions will provide the right level of support to families experiencing extensive caregiver fatigue. This program is also intended to reduce the need for Child and Family Services involvement by providing a temporary out-of-home overnight respite service, together with therapeutic supports, to help maintain stability in the home and ensure families are supported in meeting the ongoing challenges of raising a child with a disability.

The Bridge Program also provides comprehensive therapeutic support services by an interdisciplinary clinical team consisting of a family outreach facilitator, family therapist, occupational therapist and psychologist.

This expansion to a broader range of respite and support services address the following recommendations:

- Bridging the Gaps, Recommendations 2 and 9

Engaging with Families

Children's disABILITY Services (CDS) has expanded the form and frequency of feedback from families who are eligible for the program. CDS, Community Living disABILITY Services (CLDS) and the Family Advocacy Network (FAN) collaborated to develop a survey to gain an understanding of the effects of the COVID19 pandemic on people with

disabilities and families raising a child with a disability, as well as their ability to access services from the programs.

CDS and CLDS have been regularly meeting with the FAN, the Children's Coalition, Ability Manitoba, Community Living Manitoba and other community stakeholder groups to learn more about families' experiences raising children with a disability. Furthermore, CDS met with representatives from FAN to collaborate on the development of an online resource.

The recommendation from MACY that pertains to obtaining feedback from children and their caregivers, stakeholders and advocates is:

- Bridging the Gaps, Recommendation 7

Manitoba Health

- The Department of Health has recently announced the Health Human Resource Action Plan that will build upon a number of ongoing strategies and programs aimed at retaining, training and recruiting health-care providers across Manitoba. This is an investment of \$200 million to support the human resource needs of the health-care sector by retaining valued staff and adding 2,000 health-care providers to the public health system. This investment will serve to address the current wait times for children's diagnostic assessments as recommended in *Bridging the Gaps: Achieving Substantive Equality for Children with Disabilities in Manitoba*.
- In December 2021, the Manitoba government established the Diagnostic and Surgical Recovery Task Force to address waitlists for diagnostic and surgical procedures, and other related services affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Supported by experts from across Canada, the team of highly respected local healthcare professionals identify and implement short and long-term solutions to improve surgical and diagnostic waitlists and make overall lasting improvements to Manitoba's health-care system. In Budget 2022, the Manitoba government committed to invest \$110 million to address surgical and diagnostic waitlists through the task force. In June 2022, this was expanded with an additional \$50 million to support Health Sciences Centre Winnipeg to cement its place as a centre of surgical excellence, with immediate and longer-term initiatives that will also help to improve patient care and reduce waitlists.
- In response to *Safe and Sound: A Special Report on the Unexpected Sleep-Related Deaths of 145 Manitoba Infants*, the department launched a social media campaign in October 2022 promoting Safe Sleep on the Government of Manitoba channels and resources are available online, downloadable and printable in English and French. The department has also established the Safe Sleep Committee that will bring together key stakeholders to participate in consultation and decision-making related to the implementation of the recommendations from this report.

Manitoba Justice:

Manitoba Justice continues to collaborate across government to achieve progress towards meeting the recommendations set out by the Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth (MACY). The key areas recommended for Manitoba Justice are as follows:

- Use of Observation Units, alternatively identified in MACY reports as Solitary Confinement
- Track, analyze and publish data relative to the use of Observation
- Responding to the needs of youth with mental illness and cognitive vulnerabilities in a therapeutic manner

Limit the Use of Observation

Manitoba Justice continues to work towards compliance with the recommendations focused on youth placement in Observation. Manitoba Justice has adapted standing orders, which place greater limitations and guidance on use of observation and utilizing therapeutic methods to working with youth.

Track, Analyze, and Publish Data Relative to the Use of Observation

Manitoba Justice continues to track data relative to all youth placement in Observation. This information is analyzed for the purpose of utilizing various therapeutic interventions to best address the needs of youth.

Divisional oversight is in place to assess the data and provide feedback, guidance and direction as required.

Responding to the Needs of Youth with Mental Illness and Cognitive Vulnerabilities in a Therapeutic Manner

Youth in observation are provided with professional care by mental health professionals employed by Manitoba Justice in addition to the provision of professional mental health care by Shared Health (formerly Manitoba Adolescent Treatment Centre (MATC)).

Staff are provided training, guidance and support to working with youth utilizing a therapeutic, trauma informed approach.

Policies and procedures to attend to the mental health needs of vulnerable youth are in the process of being enhanced.

With the closure of Agassiz Youth Centre in Portage la Prairie in July, 2022, all sentenced and remanded youth are now housed at the Manitoba Youth Centre in Winnipeg. Resources were amalgamated with enhancements to the existing 24-hour nursing services, both medical and mental health. MATC provides a range of mental health services to youth who experience psychiatric and/or emotional disorders. MYC collaborates readily with MATC to best address the needs of youth.

Many other Winnipeg based resources and service providers now have a greater ability to attend MYC for service delivery due to closer proximity, as well as the increased ability for youth residing in Winnipeg to transition to the community for reintegration leaves towards the end of their sentence.

The Youth Healing Lodge in Thompson in partnership with Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (MKO) and the Zaagiwe Oshkinawe Inaakonigewin Program are continued

steps by the Department of Justice to ensure culturally appropriate programming for Indigenous children and youth and reducing the number of days in custody.

Mental Health and Community Wellness:

On February 17, 2022, Mental Health and Community Wellness (MHCW) released A Path to Mental Health and Community Wellness: A Roadmap for Manitoba, along with a \$17 million investment to support year one of the plan. This Roadmap identifies five strategic focus areas and represents the Manitoba government's plan to invest in and work together to create an integrated, responsive and accessible system that meets the needs of Manitobans.

The Roadmap reinforces how important it is that we work together to strengthen our system of care and support to all Manitobans, especially those that are most vulnerable, and focuses on improvements and investments in five key areas:

- Equitable access and co-ordination
- Mental well-being and chronic disease prevention
- Quality and innovation
- Indigenous partnership and wellness
- Governance and accountability

The \$17 million in funding is being used to support key priorities in year one of the five-year plan, including: increasing the capacity of mental health, substance use and addictions (MHSU/A) services throughout the province, improving access to and coordination of the mental health and addictions system, and decreasing wait times for services.

MHCW conducted consultations with more than 3000 Manitobans to develop the Roadmap to inform the direction of provincial mental health, addiction and wellness services. These consultations included frontline service providers and people with lived and living experience, to guide the Roadmap's development.

The Roadmap also builds on the extensive reports developed over the past five years including the VIRGO Report, reports from the Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth, and the findings of the Illicit Drug Task Force. It also aligns with broader plans for health system transformation including the Clinical and Preventive Services Plan.

- A number of separate recommendations from MACY call for the development of strategic documents that and are being addressed through the creation and implementation of the Roadmap, including:
 - Circling Star, Recommendation 4
 - Tina Fontaine, Recommendation 2
 - The Slow Disappearance of Matthew, Recommendation 7
 - Stop Giving Me a Number, Recommendation 2, 5

MHCW continues to utilize the National Needs Based Planning (NBP) Framework to inform decision making and investments. NBP is a national, quantitative model that key decision makers in health-planning jurisdictions across Canada can use to estimate the

resources required to address the needs for services relating to MHSU/A in their populations.

The current NBP model focuses on substance use and addictions with co-occurring disorders. Planning and development is underway by the National NBP Research Team in Ontario for a model that integrates mental health with the current substance use and addictions model, which is set to be finalized in October 2022. This will include MHSU/A services for youth and young adults aged 15 and over. MHCW continues to work with national experts and stakeholders to make progress on the NBP model, including support for future iterations which will inform the resources required to address gaps in MHSU/A services experienced by children and youth.

Since 2019, the Manitoba government has announced more than 47 initiatives valued at more than \$62 million to improve mental health and addictions services, many of which have been focused on children and youth, including:

1. Following a youth-engaged process, the Manitoba Youth Hubs Initiative locations are coming under the new Huddle brand and bringing multiple health and community service partners together to provide easy-to-find, inclusive and welcoming wrap-around supports to Manitobans aged 12 to 29 and to their families. This investment addresses several MACY recommendations, including:
 - a. The Slow Disappearance of Matthew, Recommendation 4
 - b. Stop Giving Me a Number, Recommendation 5, 6
 - c. Circling Star, Recommendation 3
 - d. The Slow Disappearance of Matthew, Recommendation 4, 5
2. Procuring expertise to lead and develop a stepped care project in Manitoba. In 2022, all of Manitoba's mental health and addictions services were mapped and organized using the Stepped Care 2.0 model. SC2.0 is a transformative model developed in Canada for organizing and delivering evidence-based and evidence-informed mental health programming in alignment with recovery principles. It helps improve flexibility to meet the wide-ranging needs and preferences of the individuals it serves. Special consideration throughout this work was given to services for children and youth as well as Indigenous peoples. This work addresses several MACY recommendations, including:
 - a. Angel's Story, Recommendation 5
 - b. Circling Star, Recommendation 4
 - c. The Slow Disappearance of Matthew, Recommendation 7
 - d. Stop Giving Me a Number, Recommendation 1, 2, 7
3. Investing \$2 million through a partnership with United Way Winnipeg to address wait times and increased pressures in response to COVID-19 within community organizations providing mental health and addictions services.
 - a. Circling Star, Recommendation 3
4. Investing \$700,000 towards continued support of the locally developed mindfulness-based cognitive behavioural therapy (CBTm) program that helps participants develop skills to improve their mental health. The government's investment in CBTm over the past two years now totals \$1 million, including a provincial investment of \$300,000 in 2021 to establish the hub.
 - a. Circling Star, Recommendation 3