

**Government of Saskatchewan**  
**Ministry of Social Services**  
**Response to the**  
**Advocate for Children and Youth**  
**Two Tragedies Report**

**February 2015**

**ADVOCATE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH SPECIAL INVESTIGATION REPORT, MAY 2014  
TWO TRAGEDIES: HOLDING SYSTEMS ACCOUNTABLE  
MINISTRY RESPONSE/ACTION PLAN FEBRUARY 2015 STATUS UPDATE**

<b>ACY RECOMMENDATION</b>	<b>MINISTRY RESPONSE/ACTION PLAN</b>	<b>YTCCFS RESPONSE/ACTION PLAN</b>
<p><b>Recommendation 1:</b> That the Government of Saskatchewan develop and implement well-resourced early childhood development and poverty reduction strategies to advance the goals of its Child and Family Agenda.</p>	<p><b>The Ministry accepts this recommendation and it is in progress.</b></p> <p>On December 22, 2014, the Minister of Social Services, Honourable Donna Harpauer, announced the formation of the Advisory Group on Poverty Reduction (Advisory Group), in Saskatoon. The group held its first meeting on January 19, 2015 in Regina.</p> <p>The eleven member group is comprised of six community members and five government representatives.</p> <p>The Advisory Group will be responsible for reviewing past and ongoing initiatives that address poverty, identify gaps and opportunities where more work is needed, and provide recommendations to government by June 2015 that will inform the creation of a poverty reduction strategy. To inform their work, the Advisory Group is tasked with holding a Roundtable event that is tentatively planned for early spring 2015 to gather feedback from the community.</p>	<p>Not applicable – see Ministry Action</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 2:</b> That the Ministry of Social Services and Yorkton Tribal Council Child and Family Services Inc. ensure high quality child protection casework by implementing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A formal process to measure staff competence in the use of Structured Decision Making (SDM<sup>®</sup>) tools;</li> <li>• A formal process to measure competencies in supervision; and</li> <li>• A standardized supervision tool to assess whether casework policy standards are met.</li> </ul>	<p><b>The Ministry accepts this recommendation and it has been implemented.</b></p>	<p><b>YTC CFS accepts this recommendation and it has been implemented.</b></p>

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<p><b>Recommendation 3:</b> That the Ministry of Social Services contract with the Children’s Research Centre to complete an SDM<sup>®</sup> workload estimation study that determines standards for caseload size in Saskatchewan. Once the study is completed, implement the recommended standards.</p>	<p><b>The Ministry accepts this recommendation and it is in progress.</b></p> <p>The Ministry is committed to this project and continues to work with the Children’s Research Centre in preparation for this study.</p>	<p>Not applicable – see Ministry Action</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 4:</b> That the Ministry of Social Services amend policy to require a case conference with all key service providers involved with a family within the initial Assessment and Case Plan timeframe (90 days) and thereafter as necessary.</p>	<p><b>The Ministry accepts this recommendation and it has been implemented.</b></p>	<p>Not applicable – see Ministry Action</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 5:</b> That the Ministry of Social Services strengthen its policy to ensure that scheduled family visits are maintained. The following standards should be embedded in policy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documented supervisory review when a visit is cancelled;</li> <li>• Rescheduling cancelled visits as soon as possible when in the best interest of the child.</li> </ul>	<p><b>The Ministry accepts this recommendation and it has been implemented.</b></p>	<p>Not applicable – see Ministry Action</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 6:</b> That the Ministry of Social Services, in consultation with the Children’s Research Centre, amend their Safety and Risk Assessment tools to ensure they support the assessment of each parent’s household when parents live apart but there is joint legal custody.</p>	<p><b>The Ministry accepts this recommendation and it has been implemented.</b></p>	<p>Not applicable – see Ministry Action</p>

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<p><b>Recommendation 7:</b> That the Ministry of Social Services research and implement methods for evaluating the quality of case practice and the outcomes of services for children and families.</p>	<p><b>The Ministry accepts this recommendation and it has been implemented.</b></p> <p>The Ministry recognizes that outcome measurements are a vital component of the Ministry’s commitment to improved service delivery. The Ministry has conducted research on evaluating quality case practice and outcomes for families and has implemented a number of outcome measurements into our evaluation and program review processes.</p>	<p>Not applicable – see Ministry Action</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 8:</b> That the Ministry of Social Services conduct compliance reviews on First Nations Child and Family Services agencies on a yearly basis, rather than the current practice of every three years.</p>	<p><b>The Ministry accepts this recommendation and it has been implemented.</b></p>	<p>Not applicable – see Ministry Action</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 9:</b> That the Ministry of Social Services ensure Child Death and Critical Incident Reviews are comprehensive and include a review of services provided to the child by other service systems. The Ministry of Social Services should consult with these bodies about the development of protocols for information sharing when conducting these reviews.</p>	<p><b>The Ministry accepts this recommendation and it has been implemented.</b></p>	<p>Not applicable – see Ministry Action</p>

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<p><b>Recommendation 10:</b> That Regina Qu’Appelle Health Region examine whether the criteria for initiating incident reviews of various types need to be adjusted, in light of their experience with Derek’s case.</p>	<p><b>The Regina Qu’Appelle Health Region accepts this recommendation and it has been implemented.</b></p>	<p>Not applicable – see Ministry Action</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 11:</b> That the Ministry of Social Services and the Ministry of Health and their related agencies conduct joint critical incident reviews for children and youth served by both the Ministry of Social Services and the Mental Health and Addictions system within the preceding twelve months.</p>	<p><b>The Ministries of Social Services and Health accept this recommendation and it is in progress.</b></p> <p>The Ministry of Health will lead discussions with the Ministry of Social Services, Advocate for Children and Youth and other stakeholders to examine joint reviews of critical incidents and individuals with complex needs. This process has been scheduled to commence at the end of March 2015.</p>	<p>Not applicable – see Ministry Action</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 12:</b> That the Ministry of Social Services and Yorkton Tribal Council Child and Family Services Inc. develop the protocols identified in their Agreement but not yet in place. Of these, the following protocols should receive immediate priority:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff training, development and support;</li> <li>• Child abuse investigations; and</li> <li>• Integrating health, education and family services.</li> </ul>	<p><b>The Ministry accepts this recommendation and it is in progress.</b></p> <p>Officials from YTC CFS and the Ministry continue to work on the development and finalization of protocols. A working group has been created to draft the prioritized protocols and progress is being made on the completion of the protocols.</p>	<p><b>YTC CFS accepts this recommendation and it is in progress.</b></p> <p>Officials from YTC CFS and the Ministry continue to work on the development and finalization of protocols. A working group has been created to draft the prioritized protocols and progress is being made on the completion of the protocols.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 13:</b> That the Ministry of Social Services increase its knowledge and understanding of Yorkton Tribal Council First Nations Child and Family Services Inc.’s operations to better support their capacity to deliver quality services.</p>	<p><b>The Ministry accepts this recommendation and it has been implemented.</b></p>	<p>Not applicable – see Ministry Action</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 14:</b> That Yorkton Tribal Council First Nations Child and Family Services Inc. fully develop its database system to make all current and historical information accessible to staff that require it.</p>	<p>Not applicable – see YTC CFS Action</p>	<p><b>YTC CFS accepts this recommendation and it has been implemented.</b></p>

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<p><b>Recommendation 15:</b> That Yorkton Tribal Council First Nations Child and Family Services Inc. develop policy to create and clarify a working relationship between prevention and protection programming.</p>	<p>Not applicable – see YTC CFS Action</p>	<p><b>YTC CFS accepts this recommendation and it has been implemented.</b></p> <p>YTC CFS has developed a written procedure regarding interactions between prevention and protection programs. Training of the procedures will be completed by April 1, 2015. YTC CFS has also implemented a Prevention Project Management System (PPMS), a computer system that allows YTC CFS to manage and share information regarding the prevention program.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 16:</b> That the Ministry of Social Services and Yorkton Tribal Council First Nations Child and Family Services Inc. provide written progress reports to the Advocate on the applicable recommendations within three months of the release of this report and every three months thereafter for a period of one year.</p>	<p><b>The Ministry accepts this recommendation and it is in progress.</b></p>	<p><b>YTC CFS accepts this recommendation and it is in progress.</b></p>
<p><b>Recommendation 17:</b> That the Ministry of Social Services, Ministry of Health, and Regional Health Authorities jointly develop mental health and addictions services to ensure immediate access to mental health and addiction services for high risk families with child protection involvement.</p>	<p><b>This recommendation is under consideration.</b></p> <p>The Mental Health and Addictions Action Plan recommendations are expected to be released later this year which will inform future planning.</p> <p>The Ministries of Social Services and Health met with the Advocate on November 3, 2014, to discuss this recommendation further.</p> <p>Prioritization for mental health and addictions services in health regions is based on level of need and risk.</p>	<p>Not applicable – see Ministry Action</p>

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<p><b>Recommendation 18:</b> That the Ministry of Social Services, the Ministry of Health, and Regional Health Authorities expand outreach and intervention programs for children with FASD.</p>	<p><b>The Ministry accepts this recommendation and it has been implemented.</b></p>	<p>Not applicable – see Ministry Action</p>
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