

2021 MACY RAP Response to MACY, High Level Summary



In May and July 2021, the Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth (MACY) Recommendations Action Planning Deputy Minister Committee provided detailed responses on progress made since 2020 to 49 recommendations directed at Manitoba (an additional two recommendations were directed to the Government of Canada) from 7 reports released between October 2018 and May 2020.

This document provides a high-level summary of the 49 individual submissions provided to MACY for their deadline of May 31, 2021. Those submissions included detailed information on the progress made and actions taken for each of the recommendations since the previous submission in 2020. Any work undertaken after May 2021 will be included in the next submission in 2022.

The material included in this summary does not include previous actions to address recommendations. Provincial submissions made in 2019 and 2020 are also available on this site; and provide information on that past work.

Submissions are made by Manitoba on reports released by MACY six (6) months or more before the date of submission. MACY released two reports in March 2021. The first formal provincial responses will be provided to MACY for these reports in 2022.

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:

Enhance Sharing of Information Across Systems

An interdepartmental working group was established to continue to arrange for Train the Trainer sessions for regulations under the Protecting and Supporting Children (Information Sharing) Act.

Training materials will be posted on a website including a training video that will be accessible to all service providers in fall 2021.

Surveys of trainers' use of these materials will inform the practice of Train the Trainer sessions and identify any areas that may require assistance in fully utilizing these resources.

The recommendations addressed through this work include:

- The Slow Disappearance of Matthew, Recommendation 1

Address Chronic Absenteeism and Reduce the Use of Exclusionary Practices Such as Suspension/Expulsions

The Minister of Education conveyed the importance of the issue of student absenteeism to the Commission on Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education, and the Commission included this topic in its recommendations for action.

The Better Education Starts Today strategy includes a priority action to minimize the use of exclusionary practices in school. #3.2: Review and update Manitoba's Provincial Code of Conduct: Appropriate Interventions and Disciplinary Consequences (2017) and develop a policy on the use of exclusionary practices (i.e., seclusion, suspension, and expulsion) for all students.

A provincial Attendance Task Force continues their work with a research agency to provide analysis and interventions for the issue of chronic absenteeism in Manitoba schools.

In spring 2021, the Department of Education released the document: *Safe and Caring Schools: A Policy Directive Enhancing Proactive Supports to Minimize the Use of Seclusion* and has been offering implementation sessions for school divisions and funded independent schools. An aligned document on best practices for minimizing the use of school suspensions is in development and is targeted to be released during the 2021/22 school year.

A number of separate recommendations from MACY are respecting Standards; and are being addressed through this process, including:

- The Slow Disappearance of Matthew, Recommendation 2
- Tina Fontaine, Recommendation 1

Promote Mental Health Literacy and Well-Being for K-12 Students

A Manitoba Education-led Interdepartmental Mental Health and Addictions (IMHA) Working Group continues to coordinate and support a number of wellbeing and mental health initiatives providing school based support for students in grades K-12. A September 7, 2021 announcement included a continuum of new or expanded mental health supports for K-12 students and the education workforce such as Sources of Strength and Safe Talk training and a partnership with the Canadian Mental Health Association to provide and oversee supports for the adults in the school system. This announcement is in addition to existing supports in schools such as school clinicians, school counsellors, existing agreements for Thrival Kits and Project 11 in classrooms and other locally determined mental health supports.

The Safe and Caring Schools: A Whole School Approach to Planning for Safety and Belonging (WSA) document is referenced in the Safe and Caring Schools: Policy Directive on the Use of Seclusion in Manitoba School Settings (2021). Manitoba Education staff continue to offer training sessions on the implementation of best practices every school year in addition to tailored sessions for schools upon request.

Manitoba Education has been developing Mental Health Curriculum Resources Document and Professional Learning Sessions for Educators for the 2021/22 school year. The document will link mental health and well-being with current curriculum strands (i.e., personal safety, personal development, social development, mental-emotional development; personal health practices, active living, nutrition and substance use) and provides additional resources and supports. The document also provides guidance and examples for creating conditions for well-being in learning environments and embedding mental health and wellbeing concepts across curriculum and training opportunities for teachers.

A number of separate recommendations from MACY are respecting standards, and are being addressed through this process, including:

- The Slow Disappearance of Matthew, Recommendation 1
- The Slow Disappearance of Matthew, Recommendation 3

Manitoba Families:

Modernization of Child and Family Services Practice Standards

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, including:

- Circling Star, Recommendation 6
- Angel's Story, Recommendation 4
- Tina Fontaine, Recommendation 5
- Infant Sleep Conditions, Recommendations 12 and 13

Enhanced Training

Two pilot projects have been undertaken in the past year to address training needs within a virtual setting for CFS staff. This includes the need for safe access to training during the response to COVID-19, ensures workers across the province have greater access to training, increases tracking capabilities; and provides an opportunity for the division and the Authorities to work together to update training available.

- A pilot project on training using the CFS database and tracking system is already showing success in reducing waitlists and increasing capacity to provide this training.
- A pilot project for training in child abuse investigations launched in April 2021. Training curriculum has been developed to meet the needs of the field for training in leading practices in conducting child abuse investigations.

Additionally, funding has been provided to New Directions to consult with key stakeholders and based on feedback, provide updated training for group care staff, child welfare workers and community partner organizations regarding sexual exploitation.

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, Recommendation 2 and 3
- Female Youth Suicide Aggregate, Recommendation 3

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. Public awareness campaigns on the issue of online sexual exploitation have been funded, including a campaign to launch later this year in all of Manitoba's Indigenous languages. Funding was provided in 2021 for the Manitoba Hotel Association to provide awareness training and information to hotel staff to help identify and support youth in need who may be exploited in hotels. Funding was provided in 2021 to provide training through New Directions (noted in above section). In addition, Manitoba Families is in the process of developing training to raise awareness about sexual exploitation for all department staff.

Information on the funding and projects undertaken across the province by the Tracia's Trust regional teams, as well as the work of the province in assisting to run a national virtual conference on preventing exploitation was provided to MACY. A new group care logic model is helping support better placement development for young people in care, especially those who have been sexually exploited.

The interdepartmental Gender Based Violence Committee of Cabinet plays a role in consideration of the work of the Tracia's Trust Strategy. This whole-of-government approach along with the continued engagement of community will be used to guide next steps and developments for the strategy.

Work is currently underway to provide greater policy and practice support for missing Children in Care; and work is underway to develop a new resource to support the safe return of children to placements or their home.

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, 3, and 5
- Tina Fontaine, Recommendations 4 and 5

Full Proclamation of the Advocate for Children and Youth Act

The province announced additional sections of the Act to be in force effective June 2021, and that the final remaining section would be proclaimed following development of a regulation to outline reporting processes. An interdepartmental working group is currently working on this and is consulting MACY in this work.

The recommendations addressed through this work include:

- The Slow Disappearance of Matthew, Recommendation 8

Manitoba Justice:

Manitoba Justice has collaborated across government to achieve progress towards meeting the recommendations set out by the Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth (MACY). The recommendations directed towards Manitoba Justice, generally fall into the following areas:

- Victim Services
- Use of oleoresin capsicum (OC) spray, alternatively referred to as pepper spray
- Use of Observation Units, alternatively identified in MACY reports as Solitary Confinement

Victim Services

The recommendation to Evaluate Victim Support Services for children and develop quality control measures ensure child-centered access to benefits. Manitoba has worked towards full compliance with Recommendation 3 outlined in *The Story of Tina Fontaine*, which recommended that Manitoba Justice evaluate Victim Support Services for children and develop quality control measures ensure child-centered access to benefits.

Use of Oleoresin Capsicum (OC) Spray

Manitoba Justice has achieved compliance with Mandela Recommendation 4, which recommends that OC Spray be limited to instances where there is immediate risk to life and to enhance oversight over its use.

Use of Observation Units

Manitoba Justice continues to work towards compliance with the recommendations focused on use of observation units. While this work was significantly impacted by COVID-19, Manitoba Justice has begun to review and adapt standing orders which place greater limitations and guidance on use of observation, while exploring therapeutic alternatives to observation units. Additionally, policies and procedures to attend to the mental health of vulnerable use are in place and will continue to be reviewed.

Health and Seniors Care/ Mental Health Wellness & Recovery:

Manitoba Mental Health, Wellness and Recovery (MHWR) was created in January 2021 to create a single ministry focused on the mental health and wellness of Manitobans. The department's work focuses on providing mental health and addictions supports and treatments to improve the lives of Manitobans in their journey through recovery and healing.

A five-year action plan is being developed to help shape the strategic priorities of the department, building on themes identified in the VIRGO and other recent reports looking to improve Manitoba's mental health and addictions services. Based on the recommendations from these reports, the plan will include focuses on: evidence-based, quality, data-driven services; service access and co-ordination; substance use and recovery; population health and wellness; and service governance and accountability.

- A number of separate recommendations from MACY are respecting the development of a strategy and for the implementation of the VIRGO report and are being addressed through the creation of this new Department, including:
 - Circling Star, Recommendation 3, 4
 - Tina Fontaine, Recommendation 2
 - The Slow Disappearance of Matthew, Recommendation 7
 - Stop Giving Me a Number, Recommendation 1, 2, 4, 5, 6

The Manitoba government has invested in the following initiatives to improve mental health and addictions services for children and youth throughout the province, including:

1. Increasing support for the NorWest Youth Hub (\$823,000). This includes funding for additional counselling and psychologist appointments, primary care visits and mental health support group sessions. In total, the additional investment will allow the number of youth served at NorWest to increase by approximately 150 per year.
2. Providing \$185,000 to the NorWest Youth Hub for additional counselling support during the COVID-19 pandemic.
3. Investing \$1.92 million to create five additional youth hub sites in Winnipeg, Brandon and Selkirk to provide youth-centred services across a continuum of care so that young people can access all of the core health and social services they need in one place.
4. A number of recommendations from MACY are addressing the creation of youth mental health hubs and are being addressed through this work including:
 - a. Stop Giving Me a Number, Recommendation 2, 5, 6
5. Providing \$1.55 million in provincial support as part of a partnership with a number of organizations to further expand a hub model for integrated youth services (IYS), including mental health and addiction services for youth and young adults.
6. Investing \$1.12 million in a collaboration between StreetReach Winnipeg and the Manitoba Adolescent Treatment Centre. Investment also provides support new partnerships with Indigenous organizations.

7. A number of recommendations from MACY are respecting addressing the need for youth addiction services and are being addressed through this work including:
 - a. Angel's Story, Recommendation 6
8. Expanding StreetReach programming in Thompson and enhancing the community mobilization hub (\$2.1 million).
9. Expanding Neecheewam's Winnipeg facility (\$3.8 million). Funding will also be used to improve access to Indigenous-led healing, care and treatment services to sexually exploited youth.
10. A number of recommendations from MACY are respecting addressing the needs from sexual exploitation and are being addressed through this work including:
 - a. Angel's Story, Recommendation 5
11. Enhancing access to mental health assessments and treatment for children and youth (\$4.2 million). Over three years, the funding will allow additional resources to be added to services already available at Children's Hospital.
12. A number of recommendations from MACY are addressing youth mental health and addiction services and are being addressed through this work including:
 - a. The Slow Disappearance of Matthew, Recommendation 4, 5
13. Investing \$2.3-million in the Community-Emergency Department Violence Intervention Program (CEDVIP) program that provides wraparound care to youths and young adults injured by violence, decreasing their risk of continued physical harm while reducing patient traffic to HSC Winnipeg's emergency department.
14. Providing \$1.2 million for mental health and addictions initiatives supporting vulnerable populations, including children and youth, and an increase in community prevention services for families based on best practices that recognize the importance of cultural connection, safety and prevention.
15. Enhancing access to school-based mental health and addictions supports, beginning in Brandon, Portage la Prairie and Steinbach (\$4.4 million). A pilot project will expand existing school-based clinical teams with psychiatric nurses and addictions support workers.
16. Expanding Project 11 (\$621,000). Established by the True North Youth Foundation, this is a school-based mental health promotion program for students in kindergarten to Grade 8. It includes virtual and in-person lessons and activities designed to improve mental health awareness and positive coping strategies for students. Approximately 5,000 additional students will benefit from the province's investment in this program.
17. Implementing the Métis CART pilot project (\$1.9 million). The project will see teams established in Dauphin and Winnipeg that include a caseworker, family mentor, and addictions and mental health workers. These teams will provide support for families with parental substance use and child abuse or neglect problems.
18. Expanding the distribution of Thrival Kits (\$1.4 million). The kits incorporate evidence based mental health practices such as mindfulness meditation, personal reflection, stress reduction and coping strategies, as well as interpersonal skills development. At least 30,000 grades 4 to 6 students across the province are expected to benefit from distribution of these kits, which are introduced to children through activities led by their teachers throughout the school year.
19. Investing more than \$1.5 million over three years in a new initiative to provide peer and family support services in Winnipeg and the Prairie Mountain Health region, led by the Manitoba Schizophrenia Society.