

SUMMARY: FILE REVIEW

Of the Death of a Youth in the Care of the Ministry

A. INTRODUCTION

The Ministry of Children and Family Development (the Ministry) conducted the File Review (FR) to examine the case practice and services provided to the subject youth (the youth) of the FR.

For the purposes of the FR, Ministry records, BC Coroners Service documents and the Draft Administrative Review by a Government Program regarding the youth were reviewed. The focus on the FR was the time period leading up to the death of the youth.

B. TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Was the risk assessment of the youth's needs (particularly in relation to a specific concern) consistent with relevant legislation, service standards, and policy?
2. Was a service plan developed, implemented and monitored that addressed the youth's needs and risks (particularly in relation to a specific concern)?

C. BACKGROUND SUMMARY

The youth was receiving services from a Ministry Program for an extended period of time. The family of the youth was unable to provide care for the youth due to the youth's special needs and high risk behaviours. A request was made by the family for the youth to be brought into the care of the Ministry, but a placement was not available for a lengthy period of time. After a specific event occurred, a Ministry placement was obtained and the youth was brought into the care of the Ministry. The youth was Aboriginal.

D. FINDINGS

1. The decision to bring the youth into the care of the Ministry did not occur in a timely manner. This delay postponed the youth's attendance at a Government Program. The youth attended the Government Program once placed in the care of the Ministry. The Government Program provided multiple suggestions on how

to address the youth's high-risk behaviours. Following the youth's completion of the Government Program, multiple Community Professionals were involved in the youth's care. However, there was no documentation that an individual was identified as responsible for ensuring the services provided were assisting the youth and not contributing to an increase in the youth's high risk behaviours. There were instances where the Standard for reporting the youth's high risk behaviours was not followed. Had this Standard been followed, the youth's pattern of high risk behaviours could have been established and could have led to program specific consultations for the youth's needs. The Ministry received a historical concern that the youth was affected by the criminal behaviour of one of the youth's parents, but this concern was not referred to a community agency or assessed as per Ministry Standards.

2. A Care Plan was developed for the youth after being placed in the care of the Ministry but, after significant changes occurred in the youth's life, it was not reviewed or updated. The recommendations made by the Government Program were not incorporated into the care plan for the youth. The youth was not involved in placement decisions and the youth's request for placement was not fully explored. During the month the youth was moved to a new placement, there was no record documenting how the youth was to be supported in the transition and how the youth's high risk behaviours were addressed. There did not appear to be an adequate plan in place to monitor the youth's response to the services provided by multiple Community Professionals. Although formal planning for the youth did not occur according to Standards or Practice Directives, actions were taken to correctly identify specific issues and Community Professionals were involved in addressing these specific issues throughout the youth's time in the care of the Ministry.

E. ACTIONS TAKEN TO DATE

1. All Child Protection Staff in the Service Delivery Area were retrained on the Screening Assessment tool, which includes the requirement to open a new incident when a new report is received.

F. ACTION PLAN

1. The necessity to complete Reportable Circumstances according to policy and standards is communicated to Team Leaders responsible for a Ministry Program. The value of utilizing supervisory consultation to assess whether or not a Reportable Circumstance is required is also communicated.
2. The necessity that Care Plans for children and youth are developed, monitored and updated according to policy and standards, is communicated to the Team Leader responsible for a Ministry Program.

3. A Protocol Agreement is developed between the Ministry and a Government Agency that addresses what could be expected from both parties when a referral is made to a Government Program by the Ministry. These expectations include:
 - The information the Government Program requires at the time of referral;
 - Clarity regarding what the Government Program provides and does not provide to a youth and their family;
 - On-going communication between the Ministry and the Government Program during the term of a youth's involvement at the Government Program;
 - Recommendations developed by the Government Program in consultation with the Ministry; and,
 - Consultation and guidance provided through the Government Program to the Ministry regarding services and planning for a youth.