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September 13, 2018

Lisa Lapointe
Chief Coroner
Office of the Chief Coroner

Via Email:

Dear Ms. Lapointe:

On May 19, 2018, a Verdict at Coroners Inquest report was released by Corner Kuzma in relation to the death of Rhett Mutch that occurred on November 1, 2014. The Coroner's jury concluded that Mr. Mutch's death was a suicide caused by a gunshot wound to the neck. The jury made 12 recommendations in the verdict; four of these are related directly or indirectly to the Victoria Police Department.

On July 5, 2018, the Victoria Police Department received a notice of the verdict from you with a request that we reply within 60 days as to what action we have taken, or plan to take, with regard the recommendations.

Here is a summary of the recommendations and our initial response:

Recommendation #7: South Island Police Departments

All members to be made aware of and encouraged to participate in care services after a critical incident.

Response:

VicPD recently conducted a survey of staff members with respect to wellness. One of the issues identified was that although a wide range of wellness support and mental health services are available to staff, not everyone is aware how to access them. Steps are currently underway to ensure staff is aware of the services and have easy access to them.

VicPD recently provided Road to Mental Readiness training to all staff. A focus of this training was to assist staff in self-assessment and peer-assessment of psychological well-being, encourage staff to access the support services they require, and to reduce the stigma associated with seeking mental health support.

Recommendation #8 – PRIME BC and the Integrated Mobile Crisis Response Team

That an MOU be entered into by both agencies so a record of attendance at a residence, and/or complainant, by the Integrated Mobile Crisis Response Team is noted and “flagged” in PRIME.

Response:

This recommendation seems to be related to some misunderstanding of how police and IMCRT reporting occurs. When requested by a law enforcement agency to assist, IMCRT Officers have been documenting IMCRT action using the “Supplemental Add” function in the Records Management System within PRIME. This supplemental report adds IMCRT’s information to the requesting agency’s original police file. In reviewing this issue further, opportunities to improve this reporting process have been identified that, if they can be implemented, will lead to better documentation, improved collection of statistical data related to IMCRT activations, and will better highlight previous IMCRT involvement with an individual which can be passed on to responding officers.

The Officer-in-Charge of IMCRT is currently examining these potential changes further.

Recommendation #9 – Police Chiefs of Southern Vancouver Island and VIHA

To require that after a defined number of multiple crises calls to police from a single source are received, the following may occur - a) an early intervention from appropriate Ministries is initiated, and b) a collaborative safety plan is created.

Response:

In addition the changes being contemplated with respect to reporting IMCRT’s activity in PRIME, the recent introduction of the Early Warning System is likely to result in improvements in the early identification of individuals approaching mental health crisis.

Recommendation #10 – Independent Investigations Office and BC Association of Police Chiefs

Consider amending the MOU between agencies to ensure that police officers can debrief in a timely manner.

Response:

This is currently being discussed with the Independent Investigations Office (IIO). On September 4, 2018, the IIO’s Chief of Investigations, Gayle Hogan, provided an update on the IIO’s revised protocol with respect to de-briefs and diffusing sessions. These protocols are currently being discussed with police leaders throughout the province and will be a topic of discussion at the November 2018 BCACP meeting.

I trust that this information demonstrates the Victoria Police Department's commitment to taking the Jury's recommendations seriously. We hope that these changes will further enhance the delivery of police services in our communities. As always, we remain committed to constantly assessing our service delivery, policy, processes and practices with an eye to continuous improvement.

Yours truly,



Del Manak
Chief Constable