

SUMMARY: COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW Of the Death of a Youth Known to the Ministry

A. INTRODUCTION

The Ministry of Children and Family Development (the Ministry) conducted a Comprehensive Review (CR) to examine practice in the case of the subject youth (the youth) of the CR.

For the purpose of the CR, a detailed examination of Ministry records and BC Coroners Service documents occurred along with interviews of Ministry staff. The CR focused on a period of time prior to the youth's death.

B. TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Did the Ministry provide the youth and the youth's family with an integrated response that adequately addressed the youth's safety needs?
2. Did the Ministry provide the youth and the youth's family with an integrated response that adequately addressed the youth and the family's capacity to follow through with service referrals?
3. Did the Ministry provide the youth and the youth's family with an integrated response that adequately addressed whether available services were provided and carried out in a culturally appropriate manner?

C. BACKGROUND SUMMARY

The Ministry had longstanding involvement with the family. Initially the family was involved with the Ministry due to the parents' high risk behaviours; subsequently, the Ministry's involvement shifted focus to the youth's high risk behaviour.

The youth resided with extended family members as a plan to address concerns and minimize risk. Several community professionals and family members were involved in planning and addressing the concerns in a voluntary integrated process. Services in the community were suggested to the youth; however, the youth was resistant to participating. Services were also suggested to family members caring for the youth; however, they also declined Ministry involvement beyond financial support. The youth was Aboriginal.

D. FINDINGS

1. The Ministry did not provide the youth and the family with a fully integrated response that adequately addressed the youth's safety.
2. The Ministry did not provide the youth and the family with an integrated response that fully considered the youth's and the family's capacity to follow through with service referrals.
3. Some services to the youth and the family were provided in a culturally appropriate manner.

The risk factors that affected the youth were not fully recognized and addressed during Ministry involvement. The youth was vulnerable due to challenges with making safe choices. The offer to provide voluntary support services to the youth and the family was insufficient to engage them in the foundational work required to sustain positive change over time. The family's role in the youth's circumstances may have been clearer had a thorough assessment been conducted and increased attention paid to planning. As the youth did not engage in support services, adequately meeting the youth's safety needs would have required the provision of a mandated service.

E. ACTION PLAN

1. Ministry staff will use Structured Decision Making tools during the assessment and planning of complex, high risk cases.
2. Ministry staff will understand the purpose and limitations of orders issued under other legislative bodies.
3. Ministry services will be provided to members of the youth's Band in a manner that is culturally appropriate for children and family.