

The logo for Phoenix Sinclair is a stylized, abstract representation of a phoenix, rendered in a light, textured, golden-brown color. It is set against a background of a textured, light brown surface that resembles paper or fabric. The logo is positioned at the top center of the page.

Options for Action

An Implementation Report for *The Legacy of Phoenix Sinclair: Achieving the Best for All Our Children*

Submitted to The Honourable Kerri Irvin-Ross,
Minister of Family Services

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

AMR Planning & Consulting
January 2015



In preparation for the community gatherings in Northern and Southern Manitoba, the AMR implementation planning team invited Aboriginal youth participating at Ma Mawi Chi Itata Centre in Winnipeg and Ma-Mow-We-Tak Friendship Centre in Thompson to create an image that represents their inspiration. The images they produced would be featured at the gatherings and help all of us keep in mind, as we discussed the recommendations from the Hughes report, our shared responsibility for children and youth.

One youth painted the wolf featured on the cover of this report. In the Seven Sacred Teachings, the wolf represents humility, and as well relationship, and family. Within the wolf pack, each member has a role and responsibilities.

Like the wolf teacher, when we come together, work with humility and respect, and communicate, co-operate and collaborate, we can achieve our shared vision of supporting our children, youth, families and communities.

Executive Summary

The Legacy of Phoenix Sinclair: Achieving the Best for All Our Children, the three-volume report from the Commission of Inquiry in the Circumstances Surrounding the Death of Phoenix Sinclair, was released to the public on January 31, 2014. The report presents 62 recommendations to better protect Manitoba children. At the time of the report's release, the province had already completed or was undertaking actions on 31 of the recommendations. With the release of the report, Manitoba Family Services Minister Kerri Irvin-Ross announced that an implementation planning team (headed by Barbara Bruce of AMR Planning & Consulting) had been appointed to address the remaining 31 recommendations.

The implementation planning team was responsible to identify actions that could be taken to implement or respond to the remaining recommendations, with the overarching goals of improving support to agencies, keeping children in Manitoba safe and protected, and promoting the healthy development, well-being and inclusion of children and families. The scope of work established for the project included:

- developing a process to gather stakeholders' insights, input and ideas on actions that could be taken to implement or respond to the recommendations assigned to the team
- meeting with stakeholders to discuss the recommendations and gather their input on actions that could be taken to implement or respond to the recommendations
- organizing and facilitating two community gatherings (one in Northern Manitoba and one in Southern Manitoba) with a variety of stakeholders to discuss community-based solutions to a number of the recommendations put forward by Commissioner Hughes
- reviewing internal and external documents and other materials that would offer context for the analysis and interpretation of information gathered from stakeholders, and inform the development of actions
- submitting (by September 30, 2014) an interim report on project activities-to-date to the minister of Family Services
- preparing a final report that presents a plan with options for actions that might be taken to implement the 31 recommendations for submission (in early 2015) to the minister of Family Services

The recommendations assigned to the AMR implementation planning team fall within nine of the areas for action the commission identified: differential response, devolution, funding, education and training of child welfare workers, supporting the transition to adulthood, children's advocate, prevention based on children's rights, building community capacity, and the importance of early childhood intervention.

A first task for the implementation planning team was to develop an approach, methodology and strategy for the project. Consultation activities, including individual and group interviews, gatherings and community visits, would form a primary data source for the project, and the team recognized that it would need to engage a broad group of stakeholders in these activities. Over the course of the project, more than 300 participants were involved in these activities:

- The team met individually and in groups to discuss recommendations with representatives of all mandated CFS agencies (63 participants) and authorities (eight participants) in the province, the child and family services standing committee (nine participants), Manitoba Family Services (17 participants), other provincial and federal government departments and offices (18 participants), collateral and community-based organizations (30 participants), social work sectoral organizations (15 participants), and post-secondary programs and research units (six participants).
- The team organized gatherings in Thompson (39 participants) and Winnipeg (37 participants) that brought together Elders and youth formerly in care or on extensions of care with representatives of child and family services agencies, early childhood development programs, family resource centres, and other collateral and community based programs and services to discuss the recommendations.
- Two gatherings to discuss the recommendations with parents and other members of families that had been involved with the child and family services system (33 participants) and with foster families (15 participants) were held in Winnipeg.
- In community visits to Brandon, Rolling River, Dauphin, Opaskwayak Cree Nation, Norway House Cree Nation, Garden Hill First Nation, Thompson and within Winnipeg, team members met with representatives of CFS agencies, collateral organizations, and Band Councils, as well as youth, Elders and other community members (60 participants).

To supplement and build upon findings from the consultation activities, the AMR team gathered and reviewed materials that provided context for and related to the recommendations, and that could inform the plan with options for actions to implement or respond to the recommendations. These included the three-volume report from the Commission of Inquiry in the Circumstances Surrounding the Death of Phoenix Sinclair, Manitoba legislation and regulations, child and family services standards, materials provided or referred by consultation participants, and other materials gathered by the team that provide information on best practices or models, and technical information to inform the development of specific options for action.

Analysis of findings began in the early phases of the project, a necessary step to ensure that the team followed through on referrals and new insights from participants that pointed to issues and areas that the team should explore. In the final phases of the project, information was gathered from all consultation activities and from the document and literature review for integrated analysis. The AMR team identified key themes and key findings relating to each recommendation, and to the overarching context in which the recommendations may be implemented. From this, the team identified areas for action, and developed options for immediate, short, medium, and long-term actions that Manitoba Family Services and other stakeholders might take to implement or respond to each recommendation.

The report from the project summarizes findings from all activities, and presents a plan with options for action. The report is organized in the following way:

- A section is devoted to each of the nine areas for action under consideration in this project: differential response; devolution; funding; education and training of child

welfare workers; supporting the transition to adulthood; children's advocate; prevention based on children's rights; building community capacity; and the importance of early childhood intervention.

- Each of the nine sections includes subsections focused on specific recommendations within that section that were assigned to the AMR implementation planning team. Findings relating to the recommendation are discussed, and options for actions relating to each recommendation are detailed.
- The final section of the report brings together the options for action from all of the preceding sections, and presents a plan with options for actions to implement or respond to the 31 recommendations assigned to the AMR implementation planning team.

The options for action to implement or respond to each of the recommendations assigned to the implementation planning team are presented below. The actions are discussed in more detail throughout the body of the report, and are the focus of the final section of the report.

ACTION AREA: DIFFERENTIAL RESPONSE

Recommendation: That the Province ensure that the family enhancement services required to support the differential response practice model are developed, coordinated, and made accessible, through partnerships and collaboration among the child welfare system, and other departments and community-based organizations

Option for action: Manitoba Family Services and the CFS authorities encourage and support co-operation between the child welfare system, other departments, and community based organizations that serve children, youth and families.

Option for action: Manitoba Family Services and the four CFS authorities encourage and support collaboration within the child welfare system.

Option for action: Manitoba Family Services and the CFS authorities develop a model and protocols for a shared service delivery framework that supports collaboration between the child welfare system, other departments and community based organizations for urban-based service delivery that can be adapted to reflect the resources and capacities of the community sectors in different geographic regions and communities.

Option for action: Manitoba Family Services and other departments strengthen the capacity of the community to deliver family enhancement services.

Option for action: Manitoba Family Services, AANDC and the CFS authorities develop a rural service delivery framework that supports access for families involved with the child welfare system in rural and First Nations communities.

Recommendation: That All Nations Coordinated Response Network (ANCR)—whose role is triage and delivery of short-term services—no longer provide family enhancement services but should transfer families who need those services to a family services unit as soon as possible.

Option for action: The Designated Intake Agency Review Working Group assess (as part of the review currently underway) whether all designated intake agencies should provide the same scope of programs and services and, in particular, whether ANCR should continue to provide family enhancement services. Reporting from the working group’s review should include recommendations that relate to these components of the review.

Option for action: Manitoba Family Services and AANDC build the capacity of CFS agencies to develop and deliver family enhancement programs and services and ensure that CFS agencies have adequate funding to support, at minimum, one family enhancement worker whose responsibilities include the development of relationships with community service providers, and additional family enhancement workers at a caseload ratio of 1:20.

Option for action: The CFS authorities facilitate ongoing dialogue between family service agencies and designated intake agencies.

Option for action: The CFS authorities ensure that, when files are transferred from designated intake agencies to the family services agency that will provide ongoing services, completed assessments and records are sent to the receiving family services agency as soon as possible to avoid delays in the time between intake and service provision and to support case planning at the receiving agency.

Option for action: Manitoba Family Services and the four CFS authorities reconsider the time frames currently allowed for family enhancement service delivery.

Recommendation: That every effort be made to provide continuity of service by ensuring that, to the extent reasonably possible, the same worker provides services to a family throughout its involvement with the child welfare system.

Option for action: Manitoba and the four CFS authorities work together to develop a comprehensive worker retention strategy that supports continuity of service.

Option for action: Manitoba Family Services and the four CFS authorities consider a move to generalist practice teams that will better support continuity of care and client/family centred practice, and support a more balanced case load for individual social workers.

Option for action: Manitoba Family Services, in conjunction with the four CFS authorities, develop a standard for transfers within an agency that will ensure continuity of care during the transfer process.

Recommendation: That agencies strive for greater transparency and information sharing with caregivers, which may require changes to legislation.

Option for action: Manitoba Family Services, in conjunction with the four CFS authorities, ensure that workers use the case planning methodology in the case recording package, which includes a case planning template, and provide additional training to child welfare workers, as needed, to ensure that they have a solid understanding of the tools and processes they use in planning with families.

Option for action: Manitoba Family Services, in conjunction with the four CFS authorities, develop a standard to ensure that workers use a family-centred approach to planning, and involve extended family and other community supports in planning for the family, whenever possible and reasonable.

Option for action: Manitoba Family Services, in conjunction with the four CFS authorities, develop a standard to ensure that all clients, regardless of case category, receive, at minimum, a written summary of their case plans.

Option for action: The four CFS authorities develop clear guidelines for information sharing with families and caregivers, similar to and, as appropriate, expanding upon the fact sheet titled Information Sharing using the Privacy Acts (PHIA and FIPPA) and *The Child and Family Services Act*, which provides clear guidelines for information sharing between collateral service providers and CFS workers.

Recommendation: That *The Child and Family Services Act*, *The Personal Health Information Act*, *The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, and any other legislation as may be necessary, be amended to allow service providers to share relevant information with each other and with parents (or caregivers) when necessary for the protection, safety or best interests of a child.

Option for action: Manitoba Family Services develop a process to determine whether information sharing issues are a result of the practical limits set by *The Child and Family Services Act*, *PHIA*, *FIPPA* and other legislation, misunderstandings of the privacy legislation, or practice issues that require additional training or discipline.

Option for action: The CFS authorities redistribute the fact sheet titled Information Sharing using the Privacy Acts (PHIA & FIPPA) and *The Child and Family Services Act*, which provides clear guidelines for information sharing between collateral service providers and family service workers, ensuring that all frontline workers are provided with a copy.

Option for action: Manitoba Family Services and the CFS authorities, in consultation with other departments and community-based organizations, develop protocols and practice guidelines that support multi-disciplinary case management teams for improved service coordination.

Recommendation: That the Authorities enhance availability of voluntary early intervention services by placing workers in schools, community centres, housing developments and any other community facilities where they would be easily accessible.

Option for action: The CFS authorities collaborate with community in the development of pilot projects to introduce child welfare workers in to schools or other community facilities.

Option for action: Before placing workers in schools or other community sites, the CFS authorities clearly define the mandate, roles and responsibilities of community-based CFS workers, and communicate these to community members and organizations that share or use the site.

ACTION AREA: DEVOLUTION

Recommendation: That the Standing Committee discuss as a regular agenda item, the programs and policies being implemented by each Authority to determine those that can be adapted more broadly, in a culturally appropriate manner.

Option for action: Add discussion of programs, policies and other initiatives that are underway at an authority and that may be modified for adaptation or inform development of culturally-based approaches at other authorities as a standing item on the agenda of regularly scheduled standing committee meetings.

Recommendation: That the Standing Committee issue annual reports of its work to the Minister for tabling in the legislature and for concurrent release to the public.

Option for action: Standing committee and minister or other senior representatives of Manitoba Family Services and the standing committee come to mutual agreement about their expectations for the standing committee's annual reports.

ACTION AREA: FUNDING

Recommendation: That the Authorities be funded to a level that supports the differential response approach, including a) funding to allow agencies to meet the caseload ratio of 20 cases per worker for all family services workers; b) Increasing the \$1,300 fund for family enhancement services to a reasonable level, especially for families who are particularly vulnerable, many of whom are Aboriginal; and c) determination of the amount of necessary funding after meaningful consultation between agencies and the Authorities, and between the Authorities and government, after agencies have reasonably assessed their needs.

Option for action: Fast track the reduction of the caseload ratio to 1:20 for all family services workers.

Option for action: Increase the province's current \$1,300 allocation for family enhancement services to a more reasonable level and explore options for introducing more flexibility in how that funding is used.

Option for action: Determine the amount of funding needed to support the differential response approach through meaningful consultation with agencies, authorities, relevant

government departments, ensuring that agencies have the supports and resources they need to reasonably assess their needs.

Option for action: Establish long-term demonstration projects in one or more communities that will be sites for intensive and coordinated prevention and family enhancement activities.

- Projects should be community-driven and community-led, draw on the strengths and address the distinct needs of the community, and focus on building capacity at community, agency and service provider levels.
- Projects will provide opportunities to 1) evaluate the impacts of focused and coordinated resourcing for intensive prevention and family enhancement services and supports, 2) develop and refine the differential response approach, 3) explore different approaches to resourcing prevention and family enhancement activities, 4) enable refined approaches (including the development of culture-based approaches) to prevention and family enhancement, 5) build capacity of agencies, authorities, and communities and 6) if they are sited in First Nation communities, contribute to building capacity for increased self-governance in child welfare.
- Include a strong evaluation component to track success indicators, such as keeping families together, reducing the number of children in care, EDI outcomes and other indicators.
- As agencies, authorities and communities develop capacity, the option of moving to block funding within specific agencies, authorities, communities or regions can be explored.

ACTION AREA: EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF CHILD WELFARE WORKERS

Recommendation: That a Bachelor of Social Work or equivalent degree, as recognized by the proposed Manitoba College of Social Workers, be required of all social workers hired by agencies to deliver services under the act.

Recommendation: That a concerted effort be made to encourage Aboriginal people to enter the social work profession, by promoting social work as a career choice and supporting educational institutions in removing barriers to education through access programs and other initiatives.

Option for action: Ensure that the Manitoba Institute of Registered Social Workers (MIRSW)/ Manitoba College of Social Workers (MCSW) have the resources needed to successfully manage the transition to the professionalization of social work practice.

Option for action: The University of Manitoba's accredited social work programs and programs that ladder into an accredited social work program develop and implement strategies to expand these programs to meet the expected increased demand for graduates of the University's BSW program. This includes strategies that will ensure that prospective students have meaningful access to these programs.

Option for action: Adopt an Indigenous Social Work program as the standard for training for Aboriginal social worker.

Option for action: Manitoba Family Services, AANDC, the four child and family services authorities, and mandated child and family service agencies work collaboratively to expand training and education activities for staff working in the child welfare system and provide ongoing support for these activities. The partners should:

- Provide financial compensation to agencies for costs associated with their support of staff members pursuing a BSW, as well as students completing a practicum at their site.
- Implement a system of forgivable student loans or tuition coverage for people who agree to contract for return of service for a designated time in the North – for example three years for a three-year degree program (minimum of year-for-year of degree program, with additional incentives if workers decide to stay on longer).
- Consider introducing an apprenticeship model for new graduates of social work programs, in which they work alongside an experienced worker for some period of time before they get their own cases or full responsibility.
- Ensure that all social workers in child welfare get access to annual training opportunities to keep current in best practices and provide a professional development break from day to day work.
- Support agencies to allow staff to participate in professional development and training while ensuring that their caseload is covered.

Option for action: The Child and Family Services Standing Committee establishes a working group to develop a strategy to encourage Aboriginal people to pursue social work in the Manitoba child welfare system as a career. The working group should include recruitment specialists from social work and social-work related programs, Manitoba Family Services, the Manitoba office of AANDC, and individuals with relevant experience.

ACTION AREA: SUPPORTING THE TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD

Recommendation: That *The Child and Family Services Act* be amended to allow for extension of services to any child who at the age of majority was receiving services under the *Act*, up to age 25.

Option for action: The Manitoba government amend *The Child and Family Services Act* to enable extensions of care and maintenance for youth up to the age of 25 based on criteria developed in consultation with youth who have been in care, and with representatives of CFS agencies and authorities, and youth-serving community-based organizations.

Option for action: The minister of Family Services ask the All Aboard Committee to consider, as part of Manitoba's Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion Strategy, developing a strategy that provides wraparound services for 18 to 25-year-olds, particularly former youth in care. Components of this strategy might include a new service tier or program, guided by a framework and standards that focus on support rather than protection, a come-and-go

philosophy that provides a supportive space for youth when needed, and resourced with sustainable funding tied to specific self-defined outcomes for the youth who access services and supports.

Option for action: Manitoba Family Services and other departments strengthen the capacity of the community to play a central role in the provision of supports and services for youth and former youth in care; this may include ongoing (not project-based) funding for youth-serving community based organizations.

Option for action: Manitoba Family Services, in consultation with the four CFS authorities, amend the age of majority planning standards to require workers to begin transition planning with youth at the age of 15.

Option for action: Manitoba Family Services and the four CFS authorities develop and introduce tools and practice guidelines for CFS workers that will support a successful transition to adulthood for youth in care, including a youth transition checklist and a corresponding youth transition case planning template that both the worker and the youth will retain a copy of the transition case plan for their records.

Option for action: Manitoba Family Services, in conjunction with the four CFS authorities, develop standards and policies that clearly articulate criteria and eligibility for extensions of care and maintenance, and ensure that extensions of care and maintenance are applied consistently across all four authorities.

Option for action: Manitoba Family Services and the CFS authorities facilitate youth transition training for CFS agencies, families and alternative caregivers caring for youth, and community based organizations that provide services for youth.

Recommendation: That a program be implemented to ensure that children who have been receiving services under the *Act*, at age 18, have available to them an individual social worker to coordinate services and ensure that they receive the necessary support for a successful transition into the community.

Option for action: Manitoba Family Services and AANDC improve transition supports for youth in care by providing funding to each CFS agency to support, at minimum, one youth transition worker position.

ACTION AREA: CHILDREN'S ADVOCATE

Recommendation 1: That the position of a Manitoba representative for children and youth be established under its own legislation, titled *The Representative for Children and Youth Act*, with these features: (a) status as an officer of the legislature, with the same independence afforded to the Ombudsman and Auditor General, (b) a mandate to advocate not only for children in the child welfare system, but for all children and youth in the province who are receiving or are eligible to receive any publicly-funded service, (c) responsibility to review not only deaths, but also critical injuries to any child in care and any child who had been involved with child welfare during the previous year and (d) authority to make special reports to the Legislative Assembly where considered necessary, including reports on compliance with recommendations made previously by the representative under the Act, such special reports to be delivered to the speaker and the Standing Committee on Children and Youth.

Recommendation 2: That the Representative be appointed by a resolution of the Legislative Assembly, on the unanimous recommendation of the Standing Committee on Children and Youth following a search for a suitable candidate. In making its recommendation, the Committee must be required by the Act to consider the skills, qualifications and experience of the candidate, including the candidate's understanding of the lives of Aboriginal children and families in Manitoba.

Recommendation 3: That the Representative for Children and Youth be appointed for a five-year term with an option for a second term, but no one should serve in the position beyond 10 years.

Recommendation 4: That a Deputy Representative be appointed by the Representative for Children and Youth.

Recommendation 5: That a Standing Committee on Children and Youth be established as a standing committee of the Legislature, and the Representative be required to report to it, at least annually, and to discuss special reports, and on other appropriate occasions.

Recommendation 6: That the Representative be required to prepare: (a) an annual service plan, with a statement of goals and specific objectives and performance measures, and (b) an annual report including a report on the Representative's work with Aboriginal children and families, and with others, and comparing results for the preceding year with the expected results set out in the service plan.

Recommendation 7: That all annual reports, special reports and service plans are to be made public, following delivery to the Speaker for placement before the Legislative Assembly and the Standing Committee on Children and Youth.

Recommendation 8: That in the hiring of all new staff for the Office of the Representative, except those filling clerical roles, consideration be given to an applicant's understanding of the lives of Aboriginal children and families in

Manitoba.

Recommendation 9: That at the end of the term of the current Children's Advocate, an acting Children's Advocate be appointed, pending enactment of new legislation to create a Representative for Children and Youth. If any amendment to existing legislation is required to make that possible, that should be done now.

Recommendation 10: That the new Act contain provisions similar to the following, which are contained in Section 6(1) of the *Representative for Children and Youth Act of British Columbia*:

6(1) The Representative is responsible for performing the following functions in accordance with this Act:

(a) support, assist, inform and advise children and their families respecting designated services, which activities include, without limitation,

(i) providing information and advice to children and their families about how to effectively access designated services and how to become effective self-advocates with respect to those services,

(ii) advocating on behalf of a child receiving or eligible to receive a designated service, and

(iii) supporting, promoting in communities and commenting publicly on advocacy services for children and their families with respect to designated services;

(a.1) support, assist, inform and advise young adults and their families respecting prescribed services and programs, which activities include, without limitation,

(i) providing information and advice to young adults and their families about how to effectively access prescribed services and programs and how to become effective self-advocates with respect to those services and programs,

(ii) advocating on behalf of a young adult receiving or eligible to receive a prescribed service or program, and

(iii) supporting, promoting in communities and commenting publicly on advocacy services for young adults and their families with respect to prescribed services and programs;

(b) review, investigate, and report on the critical injuries and deaths of children as set out in Part 4;

(c) perform any other prescribed functions.

Recommendation 11: That in drafting the new legislation, reference be made to British Columbia's *Representative for Children and Youth Act* to ascertain whether provisions other than those addressed in the above recommendations are suitable for inclusion.

Recommendation 12: That the responsibility of the Ombudsman with respect to

special investigation reports be removed.

Recommendation 13: That a public awareness campaign be undertaken to inform the public about the expanded mandate and role of the Representative for Children and Youth.

Option for action: Take action to enhance the Office of the Children’s Advocate’s capacity to represent the rights, interests, and viewpoints of First Nations and Metis children and youth, and to work collaboratively with First Nations and Metis families, child and family services agencies and authorities, community-based organizations, communities and leadership on systemic issues that contribute to the overrepresentation of Aboriginal, children, youth and families in the child and family services system. This initiative and the ongoing activities it generates must be appropriately resourced.

Option for action: Develop and implement a made-in-Manitoba model that will establish greater independence for, and broaden the mandate, powers and scope of activities of the children’s advocate. The guiding principle for the development of this model should be to enhance the advocate’s ability to represent the rights, interests and viewpoint of all children and youth in Manitoba who are receiving or entitled to be receiving, designated publicly funded services. The model should enable the advocate to provide advocacy services to children and youth, and, where it is consistent with a child-first approach, services to their families. This may require the introduction of independent legislation for the children’s advocate and other legislative amendments.

ACTION AREA: PREVENTION BASED ON CHILDREN’S RIGHTS

Recommendation: That the Province amend *The Healthy Child Manitoba Act* to reflect the rights entrenched in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, in a manner similar to Alberta’s *Children First Act*, stipulating that the well-being of children is paramount in the provision of all government services affecting children.

Option for action: Following consultations, the Manitoba government amend the preamble of an act to reflect the principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Option for action: The Manitoba government adopt a child rights impact assessment (CRIA) lens in public service policy development.

ACTION AREA: BUILDING COMMUNITY CAPACITY

Recommendation: That a legislated committee, functioning under the provisions of *The Healthy Child Manitoba Act* (in its present or amended form) be charged with:

- a) coordinating the services provided for children and families between

community-based organizations and government departments; and
b) allocating government funding to those community-based organizations, following meaningful and inclusive consultation. It is understood that funding from the private sector and other levels of government will continue to play an important role, as it has done, in supporting these organizations

and that the composition of this committee mirror the committee described by s. 21(3) of *The Healthy Child Manitoba Act*, which reflects Manitoba's various regions and cultural diversity, and includes representatives of the community and recognized experts.

Option for action: Parent-child coalitions consider expanding their mandate beyond its current focus on early childhood to include children, youth (up to the age of 18) and families.

Option for action: The CFS authorities, in partnership with Healthy Child Manitoba, pilot the Children, Youth and Families Integrated Service Systems project in selected communities.

ACTION AREA: THE IMPORTANCE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD INTERVENTION

Recommendation: That the Healthy Child Committee of Cabinet consider and recommend for legislative action a framework for the delivery of early childhood development programs with the following characteristics: a) voluntary but universally available, b) offering a place where children regularly attend to learn with other children, c) staffed by trained educators who follow a defined curriculum, and d) involving parents.

Option for action: Introduce a preamble to the *Healthy Child Manitoba Act* that establishes principles to guide the development, implementation and evaluation of the Healthy Child Manitoba strategy:

- The principles introduced in the preamble can be drawn (with one revision) from the principles that currently guide the activities of the Healthy Child Manitoba Office (HCMO). The HCMO principles relate to community-based, inclusive, comprehensive, integrated, accessible, quality assurance and public accountability
- The principle referring to 'accessible' currently states "Services and programs are available and accessible to families and their children across Manitoba" (Healthy Child Manitoba, n.d.). This can be revised to incorporate the principle of proportionate universality. For example, the revised principle might state "A universal platform of services and programs are available and accessible to families and their children across Manitoba, accompanied by supports and services that target highly vulnerable children and families and low-income and under-resourced neighbourhoods and regions, and that work to eliminate barriers to access". The revised principle would then more accurately refer to 'accessible and proportionately universal'.

Recommendation: The legislative framework for delivery of early childhood development programs should also provide for establishment of integrated service delivery centres to provide a range of services in addition to early childhood education, including public health, employment and income assistance, housing, child welfare and adult education. These integrated service centers should be located in existing infrastructures such as schools or facilities that house community-based organizations.

Option for action: Establish integrated service delivery centres in three communities across Manitoba.

- Healthy Child Manitoba Office (HCMO) will approach the northern First Nations authority, southern First Nations authority, and Metis authority and invite each to identify a community that might benefit from the establishment of a demonstration integrated service delivery centre. The general authority is not included in this group because, as noted earlier in this document, HCMO is already partnering with this authority on an integration project in the Gimli area.
- If an authority is interested in engaging in this project, HCMO will share information about potential models for integrated service delivery, and work in partnership with them to: 1) consult with and engage key partners from the community and from relevant service sectors, provincial, federal and First Nation government departments, healthy child committees, private sector and philanthropic sector; 2) with additional support from engaged partners and drawing on the models, successful practices and lessons learned from other integration projects, develop a model for the centre that addresses the needs and makes the most of the strengths and assets of the area or region it will serve; 3) plan, develop and secure resources to establish an integrated service delivery centre.

Recommendation: That government funding to support integrated service delivery centres be allocated, following meaningful and inclusive consultation, by a committee that mirrors the committee described by s. 21(3) of *The Healthy Child Manitoba Act* and reflects Manitoba's various regions and cultural diversity, including representatives of the community and recognized experts.

Option for action: Explore opportunities to empower regional inter-agency and cross-sector coalitions to allocate funding for activities focused on enhancing integration of services and systems that support the development and well-being of children, families and communities. The Manitoba government has committed to establish a Commission on Early Learning and Child Care that will be looking at ways to redesign Manitoba's system of early learning child care and guide the province's future plans. As part of these activities, the Commission could take responsibility for this action.