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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Children's Advocate reacts to lack of detail on government's progress on recommendations from the Phoenix Sinclair inquiry**

WINNIPEG - Along with all Manitobans our office is closely following how the government is responding to the recommendations from the Phoenix Sinclair inquiry and we were disappointed with the lack of detail in the government's news conference today and in their subsequent public bulletin.

While we are pleased with today's announcements around increased resources for youth who are sexually exploited and increased monitoring of the system's use of hotels, we want to encourage the government to not lose focus on the gaps in service that were also brought to light as a part of the inquiry into the death of Phoenix Sinclair.

The final report of the inquiry provided a clear pathway to strengthening how services are delivered to Manitobans and its recommendations were neither surprising nor unexpected. We are concerned there has been little indication from government that they intend to implement critical recommendations such as independent legislation for the Office of the Children's Advocate (OCA), a broader mandate to meet the needs of young people who currently cannot access advocacy support, greater discretion for the OCA to make its work on behalf of children and youth more public, on the recommendations calling for increased public education resources for the Advocate, among others.

Although the government spoke today about "greater public reporting" the lack of detail on their plan makes their commitment difficult to interpret and we hope additional information is forthcoming.

We have met with the government's implementation team on two occasions and are hopeful that they will meet with us again prior to the finalization of their report to the government since a significant piece of their ongoing assignment is to examine the 13 recommendations directly related to our office, each of which are issues the OCA has long studied.

The OCA represents the rights, interests, and viewpoints of children and youth throughout Manitoba who are receiving, or who should be receiving services under *The Child and Family Services Act* or *The Adoption Act*. We also have the responsibility for reviewing the services after the death of any young person where that young person or their family was involved with child welfare in the year preceding the death.

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