

# COMPLIANCE DETERMINATION

## Safe Sleep – Recommendation 1

**Recommendation Summary:** Develop and action plan to ensure every infant in Manitoba has a safe sleep surface (crib, bassinette, or culturally appropriate safe alternative).

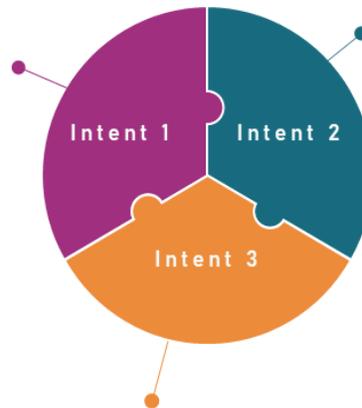
**Primary Public Body:** Government of Manitoba

### 1. Consult with First Nations and Metis governments on an action plan to ensure every infant in Manitoba under 24 months has a safe sleep surface

The response from the Government of Manitoba stated, "Indigenous representation is included in the working group addressing Public Health responses."

### 3. Implement the action plan to ensure every infant under 24 months in Manitoba has a safe sleep surface

The response stated to see intent 2 information to cover this intent.



### 2. Develop an action plan to ensure every infant in Manitoba under 24 months has a safe sleep surface

An action plan to ensure families in Manitoba have access to safe sleep surfaces was not found in the response. Evidence was not provided to demonstrate an understanding of the need for financial support for safe sleep surfaces, or that available resources adequately cover the financial realities of accessing necessities for newborns. Many of the benefits mentioned as already in existence are intended to cover a wide range of expenses for parents. The reality of inflation in Manitoba and Canada requires a more detailed understanding of how parents are utilizing these benefits, and whether they are appropriate for covering necessities for newborns.

## COMPLIANCE DETERMINATION

0.0

Non-Compliant

## Recommendation Compliance Summary

In accordance with subsection 11(1) clause (d) of *The Advocate for Children and Youth Act (ACYA)*, the Advocate retains the responsibility "to monitor the implementation of recommendations included in reports made under section 27 (investigation) or special reports made under section 31."

This form details the assessment of implementation of compliance made under the referenced subsection of the ACYA. MACY assesses implementation of compliance with recommendations once a year but receives updates from public bodies every six months.

<b>1. Recommendation Information</b>	
<b>Special Report Name:</b>	<b>Safe and Sound: A Special Report on the Unexpected Sleep-Related Deaths of 145 Manitoba Infants</b>
<b>Date Released:</b>	3/26/2020
<b>Full Recommendation</b> (including details)	<p><b>Recommendation One:</b> The Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth recommends that the Government of Manitoba develop and implement an action plan, in consultation with First Nations and Metis governments, to ensure that every infant in Manitoba under 24 months has a safe sleep surface (crib, bassinette, or culturally appropriate safe alternative) in which to sleep. The action plan ought to be targeted to both expectant parents and caregivers of infants under 24 months who cannot afford to purchase a safe sleep surface. The action plan will be designed and delivered based on the child-first and substantive equality principles.</p> <p><b>DETAILS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An action plan will prioritize the rights of children over jurisdictional or administrative barriers (child-first principle) and achievement of true equality in outcomes (substantive equality).</li> <li>• The action plan will explore recycling and loan programs, and other cost-effective and innovative approaches.</li> <li>• Parents or caregivers living with low incomes and needing a safe sleep surface will be identified through multiple systems including the health care system, Employment and Income Assistance, the Manitoba Prenatal Benefit Program, and Child and Family Services.</li> <li>• Parents or caregivers in need of a safe sleep surface will be able to self-identify.</li> <li>• As per the principle of non-discrimination detailed in the UNCRC, eligibility criteria will ensure that there is no discrimination of any kind, including national or social origins, or on the basis of race, or residence in a rural or remote community.</li> <li>• Existing governmental policies in the child welfare and social assistance programs that relate to the distribution of safe sleep surfaces will be reviewed and revised if they do not comply with the child-first principle.</li> <li>• Barriers to accessing cribs will be identified and mitigated.</li> </ul> <p><b>IMPACT:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All infants in Manitoba will have a safe sleep surface as is necessary to realize their inherent rights to the highest attainable</li> </ul>

	<p>standard of health and to live and thrive (UNCRC, Art. 24, 6).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Government of Manitoba will ensure that caregivers have the financial and physical resources they need to support child health and wellbeing (UNCRC, Article 27).</li> </ul>
<b>Intent(s) of Recommendation:</b>	<p>The intents of the recommendation are to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Consult with First Nations and Metis governments on an action plan to ensure every infant in Manitoba under 24 months has a safe sleep surface.</b></li> <li><b>Develop an action plan to ensure every infant in Manitoba under 24 months has a safe sleep surface.</b></li> <li><b>Implement the action plan to ensure every infant under 24 months in Manitoba has a safe sleep surface.</b></li> </ol>
<b>Issue:</b>	Safe Sleep
<b>Public Body</b>	Government of Manitoba
<b>Dates of Previous Official Updates from Public Body</b>	<p>June 30, 2022</p> <p>May 31, 2021</p>
<b>2. Compliance Determination</b>	
<b>Non-Compliant 0.0</b>	None or almost none of the requirements have been met; even if steps have been taken towards implementation, actions taken are not in line with the nature and intent of the recommendation, or no actions have been taken.
<b>Self-Assessment</b>	Fully-Compliant
<b>Previous Compliance Determination</b>	Non-Compliant
<b>3. Rationale for Determination</b> (How did you reach this compliance determination)	
<p><b>Intent 1: Consult with First Nations and Metis governments on an action plan to ensure every infant in Manitoba under 24 months has a safe sleep surface.</b></p> <p><b>2022</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The response from the Government of Manitoba states, “Indigenous representation is included in the working group addressing Public Health responses.”</li> </ul> <p><b>2021</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No actions have been reported about reaching out to Indigenous governments as the Government of Manitoba is still determining next best steps internally before reaching out to external stakeholders beyond its jurisdiction.</li> </ul> <p><b>Intent 2: Develop an action plan to ensure every infant in Manitoba under 24 months has a safe sleep surface.</b></p> <p><b>2022</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The response from the Government of Manitoba states, “This report identified that approximately 75% of infants whose deaths were included in the research had a safe sleeping surface available in their home. The report had individual examples but no analysis of the issue of access to safe sleeping surface for the remaining 25%, did not include information or analysis of existing support in Manitoba to assist low income families in obtaining safe sleeping surfaces, or analysis showing issues related to access to these programs. The report did not include peer reviewed medical studies correlating outcomes for children over 12</li> </ul>	

months of age related to sleep surfaces.”

- The above statement is followed by a statement supporting the position that a safe sleep surface is best for infants as related to ages newborn to 12 months, as supported by best practice data.
- MACY accepts that no analysis was taken on the 25% of infants and their families on the issue of access to safe sleep surfaces. The implication of 1 in 4 infants dying without a safe sleep surface available in their home was deemed sufficient to recommend the government have a suitable action plan in place to ensure that all Manitoba families have access to a safe sleep surface, or at minimum have easy access to the information that supports families in knowing how to financially access safe sleep surfaces if needed. In addition, while the implications of safe sleep practices change as infants age, families may still need to access cribs for infants in the 12-24-month age range – the data show that infants in that age range have still died with safe sleep risk factors present.
- The responses additionally discuss that the work of public health nurses, EIA staff, CFS case workers, and hospital social workers includes assisting families identifying economic barriers to obtaining safe sleep surfaces. The resources identified as being utilized include;
  - EIA funding for infant needs can be used to purchase safe sleep surfaces. The funding provided is \$250 for first child, \$75 for subsequent ([https://www.gov.mb.ca/fs/eia\\_manual/21.html](https://www.gov.mb.ca/fs/eia_manual/21.html)).
  - Healthy Baby Prenatal Benefit is paid to low income expectant parents and can be used towards any cost at the discretion of the expectant parents, including purchasing a safe sleep surface ([https://web2.gov.mb.ca/laws/regs/current/\\_pdf-regs.php?reg=89/2001](https://web2.gov.mb.ca/laws/regs/current/_pdf-regs.php?reg=89/2001)).
  - Care providers to children who have low incomes but do not receive EIA benefits are eligible for the Manitoba Child Benefit, which can be used for purchases at the discretion of the care provider (<https://www.gov.mb.ca/fs/eia/mcb.html>).
  - Other community-based resources which support providing families with safe sleeping surfaces include community agencies and organizations such as You Can't Spoil A Baby (<https://youcantspoilababy.org/donate/what-to-donate/>).
  - Community second hand and thrift stores.
- The response further includes a statement on how a purchased crib is not required to have a safe sleep environment, and if a parent chooses not to have one, alternatives such as dresser drawers or laundry basket can provide safe environment for newborns and young babies (<https://healthyparentingwinnipeg.ca/safe-sleep-and-your-baby/>). Public health is identified as available to help parents learn about alternatives, as discussed in their most recent Safe Sleep pamphlet. The pamphlet includes reference for parents to contact public health if they need assistance in setting up an alternative safe sleep environment, but it does not include reference to how parents can get financial support for a safe sleep surface if needed (<https://healthyparentingwinnipeg.ca/safe-sleep-and-your-baby/>).
- An action plan to ensure families in Manitoba have access to safe sleep surfaces is not found in this response. Proper evidence is not provided that the Government of Manitoba understands the need for financial support for safe sleep surfaces, or that the available resources adequately cover the financial realities of accessing necessities for newborns. Many of the benefits and financial resources identified above are intended to cover a wide range of expenses experienced by parents. The reality of inflation in Manitoba and Canada requires a more detailed understanding on how parents are utilizing these benefits, and whether they are appropriate for covering necessities for newborns.

- No actions have been reported on the development of an action plan as the Government of Manitoba is still reviewing what is required for this recommendation, including how to proceed on analyzing pre-existing programs in Manitoba that support families in accessing safe infant sleep surfaces.

**Intent 3: Implement the action plan to ensure every infant under 24 months in Manitoba has a safe sleep surface.**

**2022**

- The response from the Government of Manitoba referred to their response to Intent 2. No action plan appears to have been developed or implemented.

**2021**

- An action plan has not been developed yet that can be implemented.

**Analysis Summary:** As stated above, an action plan is not found in the response provided by the Government of Manitoba. Proper evidence is not provided that the Government of Manitoba understands the need for financial support for safe sleep surfaces, or that the available resources adequately cover the financial realities of accessing necessities for newborns. Many of the benefits and financial resources identified above are intended to cover a wide range of expenses experienced by parents. The reality of inflation in Manitoba and Canada requires a more detailed understanding on how parents are utilizing these benefits, and whether they are appropriate for covering necessities for newborns. If an alternate solution is to be proposed for this recommendation, more detailed explanation and evidence will need to be provided. Given none of the requirements have been met this recommendation remains non-compliant.