



**Manitoba Advocate
for Children and Youth**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**MANITOBA ADVOCATE RELEASES 2023-24 ANNUAL REPORT, NOTES CONCERNING
TRENDS**

Manitoba Advocate unveils trends from Manitoba's first centralized tracking system for serious injuries sustained by children receiving publicly-funded reviewable services; reveals a rise of complex co-occurring challenges requiring the need for cross-collaboration among multiple systems; and urges government action on a youth-specific mental health and addiction strategy that includes equitable and timely access to support for caregivers.

**OCTOBER 30, 2024 – TREATY 1 TERRITORY AND NATIONAL HOMELAND OF THE RED
RIVER MÉTIS, Winnipeg, Man.**

Today, Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth Sherry Gott released an annual report summarizing the office's work during the 2023-24 fiscal year including trends in advocacy, research, quality assurance, public education, youth engagement, serious injury reviews and investigations, and child death reviews and investigations.

On July 1, 2023, the *Serious Injury Reporting Regulation*, alongside section 21 of *The Advocate for Children and Youth Act*, came into force in Manitoba. This legislation mandates the reporting of serious injuries to the Manitoba Advocate's office. **This program marks a significant milestone as the first of its kind in our province.** It provides a centralized tracking system to inform advocacy, reviews, and investigations of serious injuries sustained by children, youth, and young adults receiving publicly-funded reviewable services. **Emerging trends over the first nine months of the program include two themes stemming from known reports on the types of injuries sustained: sexual assaults and penetrating wounds (i.e., gun shots and stabbings).**

The complexity of advocacy cases continues to rise, as children, youth, and young adults often need services from multiple systems. This underscores the intricate nature of the case work undertaken by Advocacy Officers. **Co-occurring challenges young people face also reveal the critical need to ensure the services provided to children, youth, and young adults are working together to address their needs effectively.**



Under MACY's mandate, the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner notifies the Manitoba Advocate of all deaths of those under the age of 21 in Manitoba. Over the fiscal last year, the Advocate has noted a number of cases where parent/caregiver mental health or addictions directly impacted the safety of children, and in some instances, resulted in the child's death. "When caregivers do not get the support and resources they need, parenting capacity is impacted," said Gott. **"While I have been vocal about the need for a youth-specific mental health and addiction strategy, the importance of a strategy that encompasses the needs of all Manitobans, and considers equitable and timely access to support for caregivers, cannot be overstated."**

The Manitoba Advocate's annual report highlights important outcomes and outputs achieved in the 2023-24 fiscal year, including the number of children, youth, and young adults who accessed MACY's programs, or joined the office's initiatives and events. The executive summary, available in English, French, Cree, and Ojibwe, highlights these key statistics:

- 2,837 requests for advocacy services
- 629 children, youth, and young adults supported through ongoing advocacy
- 90 child death reviews completed
- 73 serious injury reviews completed
- 1 report card on the government's implementation of recommendations
- 1 special report honouring Eishia Hudson
- 1,500+ children reached through I Love to Read Month
- 1,394 youth reached through engagement workshops
- 89 child- and youth-serving organizations connected with through presentations, meetings, and other engagements

"We will continue to work steadfastly to improve the lives of young people by supporting, advocating, and empowering them so their rights are upheld and their voices are heard," said Gott.

To read the Advocate's 2023-2024 annual report in English or French, visit <https://manitobaadvocate.ca/reports-publications/annual-reports/>.



Media Contact:

Lindsay Ridgley

Public Education Manager, MACY

(204) 451-6111

LRidgley@ManitobaAdvocate.ca

About the Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth:

The Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth (MACY) is an independent, non-partisan office of the Manitoba Legislative Assembly. The office represents the rights, interests, and viewpoints of children, youth, and young adults throughout Manitoba who are receiving, or should be receiving, provincial public services. MACY does this by providing direct advocacy support to young people and their families, by reviewing public service delivery after the death or serious injury of a child, and by conducting child-centred research regarding the effectiveness of public services in Manitoba. The Manitoba Advocate is empowered by legislation to make recommendations to improve the effectiveness and responsiveness of services provided to children, youth, and young adults. MACY is mandated through The Advocate for Children and Youth Act, guided by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and acts according to the best interests of children and youth.

