

<b>Circling Star</b>	<b>Recommendation Three</b>	<b>Reported Status: (not reported)</b>
<b>Report Sent: October 19, 2018</b>	<b>Public Body: The Department of Education and Training</b>	
<p><b>Recommendation Three:</b> The Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth recommends the Department of Health, Seniors and Active Living implement, in full, recommendation 5.4, per the Virgo report, as follows: <i>“Establish a concerted cross-sectoral process to reduce perceived and real jurisdictional boundaries that challenge access to, and coordination of, services. The process of developing this [Manitoba’s Mental Health and Addictions] Strategy, as well as any new opportunities and resources for working together (e.g., through Jordan’s Principle), should be viewed as an accelerator of a new period of trust and collaboration based on shared beliefs and strengths among all partners, and should include an interest in wellness, hope and families/community health.”</i></p> <p><b>DETAILS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specifically, provisions in the following areas are needed within Manitoba’s Mental Health and Addictions Strategy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Post-discharge supports for children and youth who have experienced mental health concerns, including addictions issues;</li> <li>○ A continuum of services, reflective of culturally-safe and trauma-informed approaches, for all of Manitoba’s children and youth, including Indigenous children and youth, and those who live in First Nations communities; and</li> <li>○ A continuity of care model that ensures equitable standards of service when First Nations children and youth return to their home communities.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		

## Response from the Manitoba Government on April 23, 2019:

### Summary of activities completed in the last six months

The Manitoba mental health and addictions system strategy and design project is a whole-of-government approach to ensuring services are accessible to Manitobans who need them. This includes work related to the implementation of recommendations made in the Virgo report as well as broader system design work to improve the integration and coordination of services. Children and youth are identified as a priority population in the Virgo report. As such, implementation planning is focused on improving services across multiple sectors for this population. A number of recommendations identified as having potential for immediate or short-term impact have been implemented or are in the process of being finalized.

For example, in January 2019, Health, Seniors and Active Living announced a partnership with Bell Let's Talk to fund Strongest Families Institute (SFI) to provide mental health services to children, youth and their families. SFI is a clinically-proven, telephone-based coaching service that provides up to 17 sessions to children, youth and their families who are experiencing mild to moderate mental health challenges. SFI will schedule the coaching calls at a time that is convenient for the families, including evenings and weekends. As SFI's services are provided by telephone, geographical barriers are eliminated, increasing the availability of services in rural and remote communities, including Indigenous communities. A minimum of 200 families will be served each year through this initiative.

The Manitoba government accepts the definition of Jordan's Principle set out by the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal, which includes the principle of substantive equality. We are committed to putting the needs of children first so that service is not delayed, and will accomplish this by working with Indigenous leadership and the federal government.

In January 2019, Families Minister Heather Stefanson and Health, Seniors and Active Living Minister Cameron Friesen wrote to Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs Grand Chief Arlen Dumas requesting input on how the Manitoba government can best engage with Indigenous leadership on Jordan's Principle.

In February 2019, these ministers also sent a letter to federal Minister of Indigenous Services Seamus O'Regan seeking more information about the level of federal funding and related policies effective March 2019 and for information on Jordan's Principle funding for individuals and communities provided to date in Manitoba.

Provincial staff have formed an interdepartmental Jordan's Principle working group with representation from the Families, Health, Seniors and Active Living, Education and Training, Indigenous and Northern Relations, and Finance. The working group was created in order to share



information, review policies, liaise with federal and Indigenous partners, and develop coordinated service responses as needed.

The working group has engaged with Indigenous and federal officials to learn more about Jordan's Principle implementation in Manitoba, and will continue to meet to determine the best way for the Manitoba government to support the implementation of Jordan's Principle in the province.

**Response from the Manitoba Government on June 27, 2019:**

Summary of activities completed since April 23, 2019 report

Manitoba Health, Seniors and Active Living (MHSAL) continues to work on implementing the recommendations made in the Virgo report as well as broader system design work to improve the integration and coordination of services. Children and youth are identified as a priority population in the Virgo report and therefore, implementation planning is focused on improving services across multiple sectors for this population. A number of recommendations identified as having potential for immediate or short-term impact have been implemented or are in the process of being finalized.

**(continued below)**

**Analysis of Manitoba Government's Response by the Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth:**

**Activities Completed:**

- Manitoba mental health and addictions system strategy and design project:
  - Implementation of Virgo report recommendations.
  - “Broader system design” to improve integration and coordination of services.
  - January 2019 – Department of Health partnered with Bell Let’s Talk to fund ‘Strongest Families Institute’ (SFI) – mental health services
  
- The MB government has accepted the definition of Jordan’s Principle as defined by the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal, will prioritize children’s needs, and will collaborate with Indigenous leadership and Canada:
  - January 2019 – the Families Minister and Health Minister wrote to the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs about how the Province can effectively engage with Indigenous leadership re: Jordan’s Principle.
  - February 2019 – the Families Minister and Health Minister wrote to the federal Minister of Indigenous Services requesting information regarding the level of federal funding and policies effective March 2019, and for information on Jordan’s Principle funding.
  - A working group with representatives from Families, Health, Education and Training, Indigenous and Northern Relations, and Finance will share info, review policies, interact with federal and Indigenous collaterals, and develop service responses.

**Level of Compliance**

This response does not provide enough information to determine when or how the intent of this recommendation or its details will be met.

**Analysis of April 23, 2019 Response**

- MACY requests more detail on the “mental health and addictions system strategy and design project” referenced in the response, so that it can better understand whether the strategy addresses the jurisdictional boundary challenges outlined in the recommendation and whether it will improve service coordination.
- Regarding the ‘Strongest Families Institute’:
  - Who can access this service?
  - How many children, youth, and families have accessed this service?
  - What have the outcomes been for those who have accessed the service?
  - Is the service effective in helping people?
  
- Other than reaching out to Indigenous leadership and the federal government through a number of correspondence letters, what tangible strides (actions taken or strategies developed) have been made to collaborate with Indigenous leadership and the federal government?

**Analysis of June 27, 2019 Response**

- Manitoba Health, Seniors and Active Living continues to work on implementing the recommendations made in the Virgo report. Implementation planning is focused on improving services across multiple sectors for children and youth. “A number of recommendations identified as having potential for immediate or short-term impact have been implemented or are in the process of being finalized”.

- What is meant by ‘immediate or short-term impact’?
- To be addressed in the short term\*:
  - Status of implementation
  - Information indicating a timeline for implementation.
  - Can MACY be provided with a breakdown of the recommendations from the Virgo report that have been implemented and a summary of the work done to implement each recommendation?

\*On September 30, 2019, the Manitoba Advocate sent a letter to the members of the government’s MACY-RAP committee and working group requesting additional information regarding the government’s progress on recommendations made by the Advocate. The Advocate communicated to the government representatives short-term questions for information that could be provided quickly. Additionally, the Advocate sent long-term questions for the government to address in future progress reports. The questions are designed to seek clarification on activities, seek evidence or documentation to support the activities, or to determine how the government’s responses are meeting the intent of the recommendations made by the Advocate. All of this information will be used by the Advocate to determine the levels of compliance with implementation, in accordance with s.11(1)(d), s.30(2)(d), and s.30(4), of *The Advocate for Children and Youth Act*.