

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Nov. 24, 2021

Manitoba Advocate releases 2020-21 annual report, child death data

Advocate outlines challenges children and youth are facing during the COVID-19 pandemic

WINNIPEG, TREATY ONE TERRITORY, HOME OF THE METIS NATION – The Acting Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth, Ainsley Krone, has released her office’s annual report, which provides a summary of the activities and initiatives undertaken during the 2020-21 fiscal year.

The report outlines common challenges faced by children, youth, young adults, and families during the COVID-19 pandemic. These include, chronic absences and disengagement from school, child welfare placement breakdowns due to COVID-19 infections, and increased use of segregation and solitary confinement in youth custody facilities.

“Despite the many necessary service changes during COVID-19, our office continued to operate throughout the pandemic. We remained available to young people, their families, and service providers who were doing their best to manage service disruptions, changes, and the many unknowns,” Krone said. “Our staff rose to the challenge of adapting their work to changing restrictions and a new virtual reality. The result was several new and innovative approaches to fulfil our mandate.”

The Manitoba Advocate’s annual report outlines important numbers and events from the past year, including a record number of children, youth, and young adults who were served by the Advocacy Services Program. As described in the executive summary – which is available in English, French, Cree, Ojibwe, and Oji-Cree – key statistics include:

- 2,423 requests for advocacy services
- 934 advocacy cases opened
- 1,247 individual children, youth, and young adults supported through advocacy case management
- 235 Manitoba child death notifications received
- 33 child death reviews completed, with two cases progressing to in-depth investigation
- 20 child death investigations completed
- 3 special reports released, including:
 - [*Are They Listening? Summary of Government Compliance with Recommendations Issued Under The Advocate for Children and Youth Act*](#) (November 2020)
 - [*Still Waiting: Investigating Child Maltreatment After the Phoenix Sinclair Inquiry*](#) (March 2021)
 - [*Bridging the Gaps: Achieving Substantive Equality for Children with Disabilities in Manitoba*](#) (March 2021)
- 1 report following a serious injury
- 1 [joint statement](#) on the rights of Indigenous children submitted to the United Nations
- 19 formal recommendations issued to public bodies

- 379 children and youth received educational *Got Rights?* boxes delivered to schools for National Child Day
- 28,100 [Thrive Kits™](#) delivered to Grades 4-6 students with the Canadian Mental Health Association – Manitoba and Winnipeg

“The effects of the pandemic will be felt for years to come. Young people will feel these consequences even more greatly,” Krone said. “Looking into the future, we need to seize this opportunity to collectively rebuild and reimagine nimble public systems that improve the lives and advance the rights of children and youth. I’m proud of my staff who are already doing this work for our office.”

To read the Advocate’s annual report in English or French, visit ManitobaAdvocate.ca/annual-reports/

About MACY: MACY is an independent, non-partisan office of the Manitoba Legislative Assembly. It represents the rights, interests, and viewpoints of children, youth, and young adults throughout Manitoba who are receiving or entitled to public services, including child and family, adoption, disability, mental health, addictions, education, victim supports, or youth justice. The office does this by advocating directly with children and youth, or on their behalf with caregivers and other stakeholders. Advocacy also involves reviewing public services after the death of any young person when that young person or their family was involved with a reviewable service as defined in *The Advocate for Children and Youth Act* (the ACYA). Additionally, the Manitoba Advocate is empowered under provincial law to make recommendations to government and other public bodies, conduct child-centred research, disseminate findings, and educate the public on children’s rights and any other matter under the ACYA.

Media contact:

Jessica Botelho-Urbanski, Manager, Public Education
Phone: 204-451-6111
Email: jbotelho@manitobaadvocate.ca