

Tina Fontaine	Recommendation Two	Reported Status: (not reported)
Report Sent: March 12, 2019	Public Body: Manitoba Health, Seniors and Active Living	
<p>Recommendation Two: The Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth recommends that Manitoba Health, Seniors and Active Living expedite the public release of a clear implementation plan to address the child and youth-specific recommendations contained in the report on <i>Improving Access and Coordination of Mental Health and Addiction Services: A Provincial Strategy for all Manitobans</i> (“Virgo Report”).</p> <p>DETAILS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manitoba Health, Seniors and Active Living’s plan must ensure that resources are prioritized in rural and remote locations to ensure equitable service levels for children and youth regardless of where they are living. • The implementation plan must reflect the client populations who require them and must, therefore, be culturally-informed, and be developed in ways that reflect the voices and preferences of Indigenous health experts, Indigenous leadership, children and youth, and others with lived experiences. 		

Response from the Manitoba Government on June 27, 2019:

Summary of activities completed since report was released

Children and youth are identified as a priority population in the Virgo report. As such, implementation planning is focused on improving services, including those related to substance use and addictions, across multiple sectors for this population. The broader approach to implementing the 125 recommendations in the report includes identifying actions that can be taken immediately, as well as recommendations that require planning but that may be achieved in the short-term, and those that require system or structural-level changes to achieve their full impact.

We also know that simply increasing service funding is not the answer. We must look at short-, medium- and long-term projects critically, so we can address the issues of today and the needs of people seeking treatment now while building a stronger system in the months and years ahead.

A number of recommendations identified as having immediate or short-term impact have already been implemented that will contribute to the broader implementation of the Virgo report. For example, the partnership with Bell Let’s Talk to fund the Strongest Families Institute (SFI) to provide mental health services to children, youth and their families in Manitoba was announced in January 2019, with additional enhancements announced on June 10, 2019. This funding will allow SFI to provide telephone-based coaching services (up to 17 sessions) to approximately 700 families per year who are experiencing mild to moderate mental health challenges.

Additionally, on June 11, 2019, the government announced that AFM was in the process of co-locating and embedding youth counsellors within community-based organizations. These efforts are consistent with the recommendations in the Virgo report on improving access and coordination of mental health and addictions services.

Analysis of Manitoba Government's Response by the Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth:	
<p>Activities Completed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A number of recommendations identified as having immediate or short-term impacts have already been implemented. Examples provided: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Bell Let's Talk to fund the Strongest Families Institute (SFI) to provide mental health services to children, youth and their families (announced January 2019; additional enhancements announced on June 10, 2019) ○ June 11, 2019: government announced that AFM was in the process of co-locating and embedding youth counsellors within community-based organizations. (These efforts are consistent with the recommendations in the Virgo report regarding improving access and coordination of mental health and addictions services.) 	<p>Level of Compliance</p> <p>This response does not provide enough information to determine when or how the intent of this recommendation or its details will be met.</p> <p>Analysis of Response</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regarding the 'Strongest Families Institute': <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Who can access this service? Is it available to all families, foster families, and families in First Nations communities? ○ How many children, youth, and families have accessed this service? ○ What have the outcomes been for those who have accessed the service? ○ How is the service effective in helping people? • Which recommendations from the Virgo report have been identified as critical in terms of effective implementation? What are the timelines associated with implementation of these recommendations? • What evaluative components are going to be used to assess the impact of SFI? What are the benchmarks being measured to demonstrate the success of this program? • To be addressed in the short term*: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Status of implementation ○ Information indicating a timeline for implementation
<p>*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</p>	



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*.