



PREPARED FOR: **Minister Mary McNeil** for **INFORMATION** regarding the **Interface Team**.

ISSUE: The function of the Interface Team.

SUMMARY:

- **The Interface Team provides a proactive response to external oversight bodies by: facilitating the work of MCFD's external oversight bodies; analyzing reports; responding to information requests; leading the response to recommendations within MCFD; and tracking recommendations.**

BACKGROUND:

- The Interface Team was established in June 2008 to improve MCFD's response to external oversight bodies such as: the Representative for Children and Youth (RCY); BC Coroners Service, Child Death Review Unit (CDRU); BC Office of the Ombudsperson; Public Guardian and Trustee (PGT); and the Auditor General.
- The team consists of three full time staff: a manager, a policy analyst, and a coordinator. The costs for the Interface Team's three full-time staff and support within Integrated Quality Assurance are \$254,000 a year.
- One of the primary functions of the Interface Team is to respond to information requests from external oversight bodies. In 2010, the Interface Team responded to 354 information requests and led the development of responses to 21 external oversight reports. The majority of the requests and reports originated from the RCY.
- In addition, the Interface Team: facilitates monthly information sharing meetings with the RCY; facilitates briefings on various topics of interest to the RCY and other external oversight bodies; responds to and approves requests for access to electronic systems for the RCY; works with the RCY to facilitate their research; and provides analysis on and briefs senior MCFD staff on external oversight reports.
- The scope of the Interface Team's work is diverse. In addition to the ongoing work of gathering material and coordinating responses to RCY requests for information, current projects include liaising with the oversight bodies to identify their needs with respect to MCFD's Integrated Case Management system (ICM) and working with MCFD's Records Operations to ensure timely production of case files for the RCY and other external bodies.

DISCUSSION / CURRENT SITUATION:

- The majority of the Interface Team work is with the RCY. Each RCY request for information is labour intensive and requires a collaborative effort between the Interface Team and its colleagues at both the provincial and regional levels.
- To better support the RCY and ensure that the focus of MCFD's information gathering is efficient and accurate, the Interface Team analyzes each request and seeks clarification from RCY staff to ensure that the RCY gets the information they require. For example, requests for information on policy require coordination between provincial office and the five regions to ensure that comprehensive and accurate information is provided.

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- Requests are often multi-layered and can require ongoing work and resources over an extended time period.
- Information is gathered from electronic systems, paper files, and area experts within provincial office and the regions. Each request may involve numerous individuals who search for relevant information and provide it to the Interface Team.
- Once gathered, the information is catalogued, released to the RCY, and recorded in the Interface Team's tracking system.
- A complex response can take hundreds of hours of MCFD staff time. For example, in August 2009, it was estimated that it took almost 600 hours to compile the information requested for the RCY's 2010 Final Progress Report of the Implementation of the Recommendations of the BC Children and Youth Review (Hughes Review). The estimated cost of 600 hours of MCFD staff time to compile information requests was approximately \$33,800.
- Another request made by the RCY in 2008 on devolution of Aboriginal service generated 46 boxes of material and took nearly 1,000 hours of staff time. The cost of this request, including cabinet documents and policy, programming, and budget information, has exceeded \$100,000. The latter request has been ongoing, with the Interface Team providing clarification on dozens of documents last year and providing additional materials.
- Each of these large requests is counted as one request in the Interface Team's annual report.
- Another key role of the Interface Team is to develop strong and collaborative working relationships with MCFD's external oversight bodies. In their 2010 Hughes Review, the RCY acknowledged the important role of the Interface Team in coordinating information requests. "The ministry's Interface Team . . . was accommodating and well-organized in their response to requests for information, and the Representative is appreciative of this."

Attachments: Interface Team Work Flowchart; Interface Team 2010 Annual Report.