

**MINISTRY OF CHILDREN & FAMILY DEVELOPMENT
INFORMATION BRIEFING NOTE**

CLIFF # 228942

PREPARED FOR: Minister Stephanie Cadieux – **FOR INFORMATION**

TITLE: Investigation of Healing Grounds (HG)

PURPOSE: To provide information regarding the status of an investigation into HG, a contracted agency that provides staffed residential care for children in care.

BACKGROUND

- HG is based in Abbotsford and provides residential care for 16 children in care from two Service Delivery Areas (SDA) and one Delegated Aboriginal Agency (DAA).
- HG is a for profit organization with 64 caregivers. HG is neither licensed nor accredited.
- In February 2015, following concerns that HG was not hiring caregivers according to ministry standards the East Fraser SDA conducted a review of the agency's hiring practices. A moratorium on further placements with the agency was imposed at that time pending outcome of the review and to reduce pressure on the agency which was seen as exceeding its own capacity to meet demand for child placements.
- The review revealed significant deficiencies in HG's hiring including non-compliance for conducting criminal records checks under the Criminal Record Review Act, improper or insufficient references, inconsistent practice receiving resumes, inconsistent practice on receiving medicals, no verification of credentials on personnel files and inconsistent orientation of new staff.
- HG was directed to correct all deficiencies. A personnel audit by MCFD staff confirmed all deficiencies were corrected.
- The moratorium on new placements was lifted September 2015. However, the Abbotsford MCFD office was established as the liaison office to HG to act as a "gatekeeper" for any new placements in order to monitor the agency's capacity to provide quality service. Since the moratorium was lifted no new children in care have been placed at HG.

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- The Executive Director of HG is also the Vice President of the BC Federation of Foster Parent Association.

DISCUSSION:

- An investigation into concerns regarding the care of the children in care was started on July 14, 2016 with a meeting between the lead EDS of Fraser East and Deputy Director of Child Welfare with the Executive Director of HG. The ED was advised that there is a moratorium in place until the completion of the investigation. The investigation is in the beginning stages. A letter was provided to the ED to initiate the investigation.

s.15,s.22

Program Contact (for content): Martin Bartel –Acting Executive Director Fraser East
Drafter: Trisha Myers – Manager Practice Support and Issues Management
Date: July 26, 2016

**MINISTRY OF CHILDREN & FAMILY DEVELOPMENT
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PREPARED FOR: Anne Minnings and Reg Bawa - **FOR INFORMATION**

TITLE: Background on Tamara Smith (Healing Grounds) – Procurement issues

s.15,s.22

- PCMB staff has reviewed the all contracts issued to Tamara Smith. No contracts have been made with her entity, Healing Grounds although it appears that she uses Healing Grounds to employ her staff.
- Since 2011 MCFD has paid out \$4.6M to Tamara Smith for group home and foster care.

DISCUSSION:

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ADVICE:

Program Branch Contact: Paul Cumberland, Executive Director,

Program Contact (for content):

Drafter: Paul Cumberland

Date: July 27, 2016

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Withheld pursuant to/removed as

s.22

Appendix A: FY15.16 Group Care Contracts by SDA (STOB 80)

Service Delivery Area	# of Vendors	% of Vendors	# of Contracts	% of Contracts	FY14.15 Total	% of Total
Coast/North Shore	1	0.6%	33	4.5%	\$5,105,727	4.1%
East Fraser	15	8.8%	77	10.6%	\$13,379,117	10.7%
Kootenays	2	1.2%	18	2.5%	\$2,317,531	1.9%
North Central	8	4.7%	37	5.1%	\$12,337,901	9.9%
North Fraser	8	4.7%	69	9.5%	\$10,976,694	8.8%
North Vancouver Island	31	18.1%	82	11.3%	\$10,495,604	8.4%
Northeast	2	1.2%	22	3.0%	\$3,860,994	3.1%
Northwest	1	0.6%	9	1.2%	\$993,433	0.8%
Okanagan	34	19.9%	90	12.4%	\$9,394,134	7.5%
Provincial	1	0.6%	2	0.3%	\$2,602,160	2.1%
South Fraser	18	10.5%	108	14.9%	\$23,604,040	18.9%
South Vancouver Island	39	22.8%	77	10.6%	\$13,310,453	10.6%
Thompson Cariboo Shuswap	8	4.7%	67	9.2%	\$9,576,233	7.7%
Vancouver/Richmond	3	1.8%	35	4.8%	\$7,171,581	5.7%
Grand Total	171	100%	726	100%	\$125,125,601	100%

*Each contract and vendor is only counted once even if represented in multiple Service Delivery Areas