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- CRITIC IS THE **MEMBER FOR CHILLIWACK KENT**

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Generic Pivots

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Death of Child or Youth in care

Issue: A child or youth has died in care.

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Death of Indigenous youth in care

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INDIGENOUS CHILD WELFARE – PENTICTON PROTEST

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INDIGENOUS CHILD WELFARE – PENTICTON PROTEST

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CONFIDENTIAL ADVICE TO MINISTER

CONSQUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

\$6.4M in prevention program funding for Indigenous Peoples

Ministry of Children and Family Development

Sept. 30, 2017

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CONFIDENTIAL ADVICE TO MINISTER

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CONFIDENTIAL ADVICE TO MINISTER – ADOPTION AND PERMANENCY

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ADOPTION

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Metis child/SS and custom adoption

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Tuition waiver

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Foster Kids Rally

Highlights:

- Hundreds of people are getting ready to rally in front of the Legislature today for better support of young people who age out of foster care. The Rally for Youth is calling for more government provisions for people who age out when they turn 19.

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JP Court decision

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ADVICE TO MINISTER – CONFIDENTIAL ISSUE NOTE

Multi-year action plan (Plecas) **Updated Sept. 11, 2017**

Advice and Recommended response:

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Key Facts Regarding the Issue:

ADVICE TO MINISTER – CONFIDENTIAL ISSUE NOTE

- The ministry has developed a Multi Year Action Plan (MYAP) as an overarching framework that sets out key strategies to be taken over the next three years to achieve the ministry's new long-term vision for children, youth and their families in British Columbia.
- The MYAP was released to ministry staff on March 1, 2017.
- The plan addresses training, quality assurance mechanisms, streamlined policies and standards, an early warning system and alert code model for high-risk cases, and public confidence in MCFD.

Background:

- On Dec. 14, 2015, Bob Plecas released Part 1 of his review of policy, practice and legislation of child welfare in B.C. in relation to a judicial decision in the J.P. case.
The report calls for a strategic multi-year plan with eight components for consideration:
 1. Rethink the management model;
 2. Strengthen staff resources;
 3. Restore MCFD's programs;
 4. Respect and support professional decision making and professional growth, including technological tools;
 5. Streamline policy, and move practice towards evidence-based, structured delivery;
 6. Fully implement Quality Assurance;
 7. Provide appropriate and effective oversight, and;
 8. Put appropriate financial resources in place.
- Media coverage of the report focused largely on the question of oversight – specifically, the recommendation that MCFD put in place a Quality Assurance program and gradually transition the Representative for Children and Youth away from her role as Quality Assurance Reviewer.
- The First Nations Leadership Council called the report "fundamentally flawed" and the then Representative for Children and Youth, Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond, called on the Province to shelve the report in its entirety.
- Plecas later withdrew his recommendations around RCY review.
- With regards to funding, the report recommended that additional funding for fiscal 2016/17 be targeted at \$50 million. Budget 2016 provided \$65.5 million in new funding to help with existing pressures and allow the ministry to move forward on addressing items in Part 1 of the Plecas report.
- The 54 points of consideration in the Plecas Report have been considered in the MYAP. The following progress has been made:
 - 7 recommendations have been substantially completed
 - 30 are underway with specific actions being taken
 - 14 are under consideration by the Select Standing Committee on Children and Youth

ADVICE TO MINISTER – CONFIDENTIAL ISSUE NOTE

- 3 recommendations are not proceeding

Program Contact: Allison Bond
GCPE Contact: Shawn Larabee

ADVICE TO MINISTER – CONFIDENTIAL ISSUE NOTE

JP v. HMTQ et al
Updated Sept. 11, 2017

Advice and Recommended Response:

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ADVICE TO MINISTER – CONFIDENTIAL ISSUE NOTE

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Key Facts Regarding the Issue:

JP commenced litigation arising from the removal of her children and her subsequent involvement with MCFD. After a lengthy trial, on July 14, 2015 Justice Walker issued a decision on liability only, which found negligence, misfeasance and breach of duty. On Aug. 31, 2017, that ruling was overturned by the Court of Appeal. The three-judge panel found the lower court justice relied on unqualified expert evidence, so the judgment has been set aside and a new trial ordered.

Mr. Plecas submitted his interim report to the Minister on Dec. 14, 2015. It did not consider case-specific matters as there were still active court proceedings underway. On Sept. 7, Plecas submitted the second phase of his report, this one a case review which focuses on case practice in the JP v HMTQ matter.

Background:

A BC Supreme Court judge ruled against the Ministry in civil court where a mother was suing the ministry for negligence, bad faith, and breach of public duty. Government initiated an appeal and a policy review through Bob Plecas.

On Nov. 23, 2015, the BC Court of Appeal approved the applications by William Strickland (MCFD team leader at time of involvement) and BG to be added as parties to the appeal. Both applicants filed their own factums and challenged the findings made by Justice Walker in relation to them personally.

There are a number of negative findings contained in the BC Supreme Court judge decision.

Justice Walker found that the plaintiffs had proven the following:

- Misfeasance
- Intentional misconduct
- Bad faith

ADVICE TO MINISTER – CONFIDENTIAL ISSUE NOTE

- Reckless disregard for the director's obligation to protect children; and
- Breach of the standard of care
- Breach of fiduciary duty

He found that:

- the Director did not owe a duty of care to JP, so her claims in negligence and breach of duty fail – but her claims in misfeasance do not.
- the Director failed to adequately assess and investigate the report of sexual abuse of the 3 older children and unreasonably supported the father's claim to custody of the children even if he had sexually abused them. He also finds the Director approached the case with a closed mind.
- the immunity that ordinarily attaches to good faith discretionary decisions is not afforded to the Director and social workers in this case.

The individual staff members who were involved and who testified are named (full names and roles) in the decision and critical comments are made. The decision sets out that fault is not attributable to a single employee. Judge Walker finds that "different employees are at fault for different and not necessarily mutually exclusive reasons depending on the point in time".

The plaintiff also made a complaint to the Office of the Privacy Commissioner that she does not want Mr. Plecas to review her files. The OIPC has since ruled that the disclosures in question were authorized under s.33.2(c) of the *CFCSA*, and that security arrangements made by the Ministry for the conduct of its review met its obligation, pursuant to s. 30 of the *Act*, to make reasonable security arrangements against such risks as unauthorized access, collection, use, disclosure or disposal.

History:

- The Plaintiff, JP filed a Writ of Summons and Statement of Claim served on Legal Services Branch Dec. 11, 2011.
- JP is acting on her own behalf, and as litigation guardian for her minor children, who are also plaintiffs in the action.
- In the Statement of Claim the plaintiff alleges that MCFD owed a duty of care to her and her children while investigating allegations of sexual abuse against her ex-spouse as disclosed by her children.
- The children were removed from plaintiff's care in December 2009. They were returned to her care in 2012.
- Plaintiff is seeking damages alleging negligence, and breach of fiduciary duty vis-à-vis this Ministry and its staff in respect of the investigation of sexual abuse and the subsequent apprehension of her children.
- Media has covered the trial. An editorial published in the Vancouver Sun on July 5, 2013 states: "This is an ugly indictment of the ministry and calls out for an investigation by the Representative of Children and Youth. Aside from the liability issues, there is a serious question about how this happened and why it took so long to resolve."

Program Contact: Christine Massey, Allison Bond

Kids on the bus

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— Allison Bond, Deputy Minister of Children and Family Development:

“In British Columbia there is no legislated age that is uniformly applied: every circumstance is unique and treated on its own terms, and our ministry completely supports building independence in kids. Children as young as 10, or even younger, may ride the bus alone if they are well prepared, comfortable and capable of doing so. It’s the role of all parents, and the ministry, to support the children in their care with the guidance, skills and emotional maturity required for a successful adult life. However, when the Ministry receives a child protection concern it is legislatively obligated to assess it. Deciding whether and where it’s appropriate to leave a child on his or her own isn’t just about age. It’s about the particular circumstances in place and – just as crucially – a child’s level of maturity, comfort and sense of safety with the arrangement. And when a young person has been entrusted with not only his or her own safety but also that of a younger child or children, then that is a scenario which must be considered.”

ADVICE TO MINISTER – CONFIDENTIAL ISSUE NOTE

Kids on the bus

Sept. 7, 2017

Advice and Recommended response:

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Key Facts Regarding the Issue:

- A father and prominent lifestyle blogger has said he will seek a lawsuit against the

ADVICE TO MINISTER – CONFIDENTIAL ISSUE NOTE

ministry over what he sees as unfair treatment at the hands of social workers who ruled that his four children (ages 6-11) could not ride the bus on their own.

- The issue has been covered extensively in the media.
- Many outlets have focused on two letters sent to the father from social workers: one outlining their position following an investigation into complaints around the children being left unattended, and another summarizing certain legal opinions the social workers deemed pertinent to the case.
- Based on segments of these letters the father has shared on his blog and through the media, many members of the public now believe that 10 is the age at which a child may be left unattended and 12 is the age at which a child may supervise other children.
- This is inaccurate and misleading.
- There is no specific age in federal or B.C. legislation, nor is there specific ministerial policy that dictates when a child can be unsupervised.
- Whenever the ministry receives a report that a child has been left unattended, social workers would take steps to assess the child's safety, based on a number of considerations, including:
 - the child's personal views and comfort level with the arrangement;
 - the child's capacity and maturity;
 - how long the child is being left alone;
 - the time of day;
 - the safety measures that are in place;
 - whether there are other children present;
 - whether the child has access to responsible adults and the means to contact his or her parents; and
 - any historical concerns or other factors affecting the family.
- Each and every time the ministry is contacted social workers look into the circumstances, assess the risk to the child (or children) and the parent's ability to provide care, and – based on those findings – take the most appropriate course of action. If social workers determine there is a risk to a child/to children, their first step is to immediately reduce that risk.
- The unique circumstances of each situation determine next steps, which may involve putting services or supports in place to ensure that the health and well-being of the child/children are being addressed.
- Everyone has a duty to report a situation in which a child may be at risk. In assessing the nature of that risk, social workers exercise their professional judgement within the parameters established by ministry policy and the *Child, Family and Community Service Act*.

Program Contact: Allison Bond; Katherine LeReverend
GCPE Contact: Shawn Larabee

To: Mira Oreck^{s.22}

Subject: ACTION ALERT: Tell your MLA that child care needs to be a top priority in Budget 2018



Mira —

[Click here to send a letter telling government that affordable, quality child care needs to be a top priority in BC's 2018 Budget.](#)

The results are in — participants in BC's recent budget consultation process overwhelmingly responded that access to affordable, quality child care should be a top priority for government.

The survey results made it clear that British Columbians know focusing on affordable child care will support children & families, create good jobs, build a sustainable economy, and help make life more affordable in every corner of our province.

Now, we need to make sure that government follows through on their commitments by making an investment in licensed child care of at least **\$225M** in BC's 2018 Budget.

[Will you take a minute to send a letter to your local MLA and other key decision makers to tell them directly that affordable, quality child care](#)

CLICK HERE TO TAKE ACTION

Planning for Budget 2018 is happening now -- so government needs to know we expect investment that will bring tangible benefits for families and educators. For licensed child care in BC, this means:

- **Reducing Infant/Toddler parent fees by \$500 per month**
- **No fees for families with annual incomes under \$40,000**
- **22,500 new spaces in the next 3 years**
- **\$1 an hour wage enhancement for Early Childhood Educators**

The \$10aDay Child Care Plan's latest policy brief lays out these first steps in more detail, and I encourage you to check it out here:

www.10aday.ca/first_steps_policy_brief

BC's child care chaos won't be solved overnight, but making sure the BC government takes these first steps in Budget 2018 is key to building the child care system that BC families want and need.

[Click here to send a letter telling government that affordable, quality child care needs to be a top priority in BC's 2018 Budget.](#)

Thanks again for your ongoing support,

Sharon & the \$10aDay Team

<http://www.10aday.ca/>

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Unsubscribe

Thank you for your message in support of affordable, quality child care. We appreciate hearing from you on this critical issue.

We are going to make affordable, accessible and quality child care a reality for B.C. families. Your new government understands that investing in universal child care and early learning is the right thing to do for our kids, for families and for the economy.

For families who are struggling today, we know this change can't come fast enough. My colleagues and I have been clear in our support for the \$10/Day plan. As we move towards our first full Budget in February child care is a top priority.

Thank you for your email.

Childcare

Highlights:

- The NDP promised to bring in \$10 a day childcare to help working families, but this isn't reflected in the current budget update.
- The Green Party does not support the \$10 a day plan as is, but is supportive of affordable child care options. The BC Coalition of Child Care Advocates is still calling for \$10 a day child care.
- Consultation is underway with stakeholders and the public on the design for the child care plan.
- A BC Liberal Leadership Candidate has proposed free, optional kindergarten for 4 year olds. Green Party leader Andrew Weaver has said he supports to proposal because it "follows in the footsteps" of his election platform. Meanwhile another leadership candidate has proposed creating 75,000 new childcare spaces over 4 years and increasing subsidies for low- to moderate-income families.

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Background:

- Canada ranks last among developed countries for child-care spending, and B.C. has some of the highest fees in the country.
- The cost of child care in B.C. has risen by 35% since 2007, while wages have only increased by 10%.
- The median fee paid by parents of toddlers in Vancouver is \$1,325 a month.
- According to the Centre for Spatial Economics, the \$10 a day plan would create a 2% – or \$5.79 billion – increase to provincial GDP by the time it is fully implemented.
- Budget 2017-18 includes a \$20 million increase in child care to increase our spending on early childhood development and child care to \$330 million this year and support more than 4,000 new child care spaces.
- Minister of State Katrina Chen's mandate letter calls on her to:
 - Work with all levels of government, child-care providers, the private and not-for-profit sectors to implement a universal child-care plan that provides affordable, accessible and high-quality care and early learning to every child whose family wants or needs it, starting with infant/toddler programs before gradually expanding.
 - Provide additional investments in the Early Childhood Educator workforce through training, education and fair wages to enhance and ensure quality.
 - Accelerate the creation of new child-care spaces in communities across the province as part of building a Better BC.

Childcare: Baby Case

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Childcare: Baby ^{s.22} Case

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Where is \$10 a Day Childcare?

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Unlicensed Childcare

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After School Care Space

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ADVICE TO MINISTER – CONFIDENTIAL ISSUE NOTE

Child Care in B.C. Updated: Sept 21, 2017

Advice and Recommended Response:

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ADVICE TO MINISTER – CONFIDENTIAL ISSUE NOTE

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Key Facts Regarding the Issue:

- Canada ranks last among developed countries for child-care spending, and B.C. has some of the highest fees in the country.
- The cost of child care in B.C. has risen by 35% since 2007, while wages have only increased by 10%.
- The median fee paid by parents of toddlers in Vancouver is \$1,325 a month.
- According to the Centre for Spatial Economics, the \$10 a day plan would create a 2% – or \$5.79 billion – increase to provincial GDP by the time it is fully implemented.
- Government currently invests nearly \$120 million annually in the Child Care Subsidy program, which currently supports nearly 20,000 children and their families each month throughout B.C.
- Since Nov. 2014, the Province has invested a total of \$26.5 million to support the creation of approximately 4,300 new child-care spaces throughout B.C.
- In 2017-18, the Province will invest \$2.4 million to create over 5,000 new before- and after-school recreation spaces, in partnership with the Ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural Development, and the BC Recreation and Parks Association (BCRPA) and the Directorate of Agencies for School Health (DASH-BC).
- The Province will also support the creation of up to 4,100 new licensed child-care spaces in B.C. through the fourth Child Care Major Capital Funding intake.
- The ministry also invests about \$92 million in child care operating funding each year to help providers cover day-to-day operating costs, help keep parent fees more affordable, provide fair salaries and maintain quality services.
- Development of the ELCC Framework will begin in 2016/17 collaboratively between the federal, provincial and territorial governments, and Indigenous peoples.
- The federal government also launched the \$23-billion Canada Child Benefit (CCB) in 2016/17, at the same time eliminating the Canada Child Tax Benefit, National Child

ADVICE TO MINISTER – CONFIDENTIAL ISSUE NOTE

Benefit supplement, Universal Child Care Benefit, income-splitting for couples with children, and Children's Fitness Tax Credit.

- Under the new federal Canada Child Benefit, families with incomes under \$30,000 will receive a maximum benefit of \$6,400 per child under the age of six and \$5,400 per child aged 6-17, a gain of about \$1,500 a year per child.

Program Contact: Jon Barry / Aleksandra Stevanovic

Ministry Contact: Brendan Wright

CONFIDENTIAL ADVICE TO MINISTER

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

UBCM 2017

Ministry of Children and Family Development

September 26, 2017

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Children and Family Development Main

Highlights:

- On November 7 during QP, the Member for Coquitlam–Burke Mountain asked Minister Conroy about the MCFD budget update. She asked why there was no new money set aside compared to the previous government's Spring budget.
- She followed up with a supplemental on why there is no new funding for Childcare in the budget update.

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Solution:

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Background:

Children in Care Statistics

- Updated: June 9, 2017
- Provincial Numbers:
- The number of children in ministry care on May 31, 2017 was 6,898. That is a 35% decline from May 2001 (10,681).
- Of that number, 4,337 Aboriginal children in care make up 62.9% of the ministry's total caseload.
- The total number of Aboriginal children served by a Delegated Aboriginal Agency has more than tripled since 2001 – from 561 (May 2001) to 1,952 (May 2017).
- There are 23 delegated agencies across B.C.

Grand Chief Ed John's Recommendations:

- In September 2015, Grand Chief Ed John was appointed as Special Advisor to the Minister on Indigenous children in care, permanency and early years. In his role, Grand Chief John met with 86 First Nations, 10 Delegated Aboriginal Agencies and 12 organizations or interest groups over a 14-month period.
- In November 2016, Grand Chief Ed John produced a report recommending 85 systemic changes in government's approach to Aboriginal child welfare, 71 of which fall under the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD).
- This report has been considered in the context of the ministry's operational plan and Budget 2017, of which \$70.1 million was allocated for 2017/18 to

make improvements in line with Grand Chief Ed John's recommendations, including:

- \$14.4 million to help ensure Delegated Aboriginal Agencies are funded at levels equitable to the ministry;
- \$24.2 million for family supports and reunification, culturally appropriate services, and additional staff within Indigenous communities; and,
- \$16 million for services to children in care including those with special needs.

Childcare:

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- The cost of child care in B.C. has risen by 35% since 2007, while wages have only increased by 10%.
- The median fee paid by parents of toddlers in Vancouver is \$1,325 a month.
- According to the Centre for Spatial Economics, the \$10 a day plan would create a 2% – or \$5.79 billion – increase to provincial GDP by the time it is fully implemented.
- Budget 2017-18 includes a \$20 million increase in child care to increase our spending on early childhood development and child care to \$330 million this year and support more than 4,000 new child care spaces.
- Minister of State Katrina Chen's mandate letter calls on her to:
 - Work with all levels of government, child-care providers, the private and not-for-profit sectors to implement a universal child-care plan that provides affordable, accessible and high-quality care and early learning to every child whose family wants or needs it, starting with infant/toddler programs before gradually expanding.
 - Provide additional investments in the Early Childhood Educator workforce through training, education and fair wages to enhance and ensure quality.
 - Accelerate the creation of new child-care spaces in communities across the province as part of building a Better BC.

Children and Family Services – Budget

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Children and Family Services – Budget

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MCFD Office Budget Increase

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Commitments Not Funded

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ADVICE TO MINISTER – CONFIDENTIAL ISSUE NOTE

Child and Youth Mental-Health (CYMH) Services Updated: September 5, 2017

Advice and Recommended Response:

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ADVICE TO MINISTER – CONFIDENTIAL ISSUE NOTE

Key Facts Regarding the Issue:

- Access to child and youth mental-health services has been a recurring issue in the media, and parents have said that there's a gap in services, wait lists are too long and services are difficult to navigate.
- In addition, the Representative for Children and Youth has put out several reports in recent years, criticising the previous government's approach to youth mental-health and the length of time young people are waiting to receive services and support.
- B.C.'s new government pledged to transform B.C.'s mental health system by improving access, investing in early prevention and intervention before a crisis.
- MCFD offers community-based services, some residential child and youth mental-health services, as well as youth substance-use services. Together with physicians, school districts, community practitioners and agencies, the ministries, health authorities and partners like the Child and Youth Mental Health and Substance Use Collaborative, MCFD provides a full complement of services for children and youth.
- B.C. is facing an increased demand for services with more than 28,000 children and youth receiving community mental-health services each year – over double the number who received support in 2003. Research indicates that approximately 84,000 children and youth a year in B.C. could benefit from mental-health support.
- It is widely agreed that voluntary services – such as detox, residential treatment, and outpatient addictions and/or mental-health counselling – are the most effective means of addressing addiction issues, which are often concurrent with mental-health problems. "Voluntary" means that youth have the choice to participate or not.

Current Services highlights:

- MCFD supports FamilySmart, which provides tools and tips for caregivers and professionals to help children with mental-health challenges and will soon expand to New Westminster, Burnaby, Smithers, Sooke and Vancouver Island's Westshore communities.
- The Canadian Mental Health Association's 'Confident Parents, Thriving Kids' program helps parents address moderate behavioural issues in children aged 3-12 years. Increased funding will support nearly 3,000 families annually and expand the program to include in-person coaching and Indigenous components.
- B.C. has more than 90 walk-in child and youth mental-health intake clinics that are reducing initial assessment wait times for families.
- Tele-mental health videoconferencing connects young people in northern/rural B.C. communities, including Prince Rupert, Smithers, Terrace, Kitimat, Hazelton, Burns Lake, Vanderhoof, New Aiyansh, and Cranbrook, to psychiatrists in Vancouver.
- An online service map provides B.C. families with information about services in their community.

Treatment beds for children and youth:

- As of March 31, 2017, there are a total of 284 beds available in B.C. specifically for children and youth with mental-health and/or substance-use challenges, including:
 - 88 acute and tertiary beds, including 40 dedicated beds at BC Children and

ADVICE TO MINISTER – CONFIDENTIAL ISSUE NOTE

Women's Health Centre and the recently opened 10-bed inpatient unit at HOpe Centre in April 2017.

- 152 community beds, including 14 eating disorder treatment beds at Looking Glass Residence and 138 substance use treatment beds, including the recently opened 22-bed program at Ashnola at The Crossing and Renfrew House, a six-bed youth group home that offers housing, social supports and clinical care for young adults age 16 to 24.
- MCFD funds 22 beds through community-based Full-Time Attendance Programs for youth offenders with substance use issues — used as an alternative to custody for youth aged 12 to 17 — and 22 beds at the Maples Adolescent Treatment Centre for youth with significant psychiatric and behavioural difficulties.
- By the end of 2017, at minimum, another 30 mental health and substance use beds for youth will be open throughout the province, including:
 - The 10-bed Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Stabilization Unit at Surrey Memorial Hospital will open in 2017 and provide short-stay assessment and crisis stabilization for children and youth who require urgent access to care.
 - 20 community substance-use beds to open in response to the opioid crisis.
 - And new treatment beds are on the way through \$12.9 million over three years through the Ministry of Health to establish up to 28 highly specialized treatment beds for up to 84 youth under 17 struggling with severe substance-use disorders per year.

ACYMH Services:

- Aboriginal CYMH (ACYMH) services were developed to complement existing CYMH services, with a stronger emphasis on outreach and building relationships with Indigenous communities.
- ACYMH offers a similar array of clinical services as CYMH, and incorporates nation-specific cultural interventions into services for Aboriginal children and youth.
- All CYMH workers receive cultural awareness training, and are encouraged to know the cultural practices of local First Nations and are more likely to do outreach work, travel to their clients' communities and build relationships there.
- Aboriginal children and youth are also served through general CYMH services, and ACYMH staff have the same policies, procedures and training of other CYMH staff.
- The Aboriginal Child and Youth Mental-Health Leadership Network meets quarterly to:
 - Enhance service delivery by connecting ministry ACYMH teams with contracted teams to provide support and share knowledge and experiences about practices and operations.
 - Share knowledge about traditional values, wise practice approaches and conditions that support these.
 - Share educational and development opportunities.
 - Promote collaboration and strong working relationships between service delivery areas, local MCFD teams, contractors and the broader CYMH Leadership network.

ADVICE TO MINISTER – CONFIDENTIAL ISSUE NOTE

Original February 2017 Budget investments:

- MCFD invests approximately \$110 million a year to address child and youth mental-health and substance-use challenges in B.C. on top of the \$1.45 billion the Ministry of Health invests annually.
- Budget 2017 committed an additional \$165 million over the next three years to enhance mental-health and substance-use services, including several initiatives that focus on youth. These include:
 - \$45 million to MCFD to hire up to 120 more mental health practitioners, serving 7,000 additional youth annually by 2020.
 - \$12.9 million for up to 28 additional highly specialized substance-use residential treatment beds.
 - \$8.4 million for the expansion of up to five more Foundry integrated youth service centres, each expected to serve 1,200-2,500 youth annually. This will increase the total number of Foundry centres in B.C. to 11.
 - \$4.5 million to the Ministry of Advanced Education to enhance mental-health supports for post-secondary students.
 - \$2.25 million to develop Youth Bounce Back.
- Budget 2017 also provides additional funding for the Complex Care Intervention Program, providing intervention services for youth in care who have experienced trauma and need extra help.
- On Mar. 8, 2017, the Mental Health Commission of Canada released a report on Canada's mental-health and substance-use service delivery: *Strengthening the Case for Investing in Canada's Mental-health System: Economic Considerations*. They call for more early intervention investments to reduce negative outcomes and costs associated with those later, which aligns with investments in Budget 2017.

Program Contacts: Robert Lampard/Christine Massey
Ministry Contact: Kirsten Youngs (250) 356-0543

ADVICE TO MINISTER – CONFIDENTIAL ISSUE NOTE

Opioid crisis and B.C.'s youth Updated: September 5, 2017

Advice and Recommended Response:

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ADVICE TO MINISTER – CONFIDENTIAL ISSUE NOTE

Key Facts Regarding the Issue:

- The number of people dying from illegal drug overdoses is still at record-high levels, despite significant actions that public health and safety officials have undertaken.
- The BC Coroners Service (BCCS) reported 935 illicit drug overdose deaths in calendar year 2016, 27 of which were youth up to 19 years. Of these, **12 youth had received services from MCFD. None were 'in care' of the Director at time of death.** Fentanyl was detected in 9 of the 12 MCFD fatalities.
- From January 1, 2017 to May 31, 2017, the BCCS reported 617 illicit drug overdose deaths in the province. Of those, **9 were children/youth between 10 to 18 years of age.** (BCCS will not confirm until 2018 whether these youth were receiving MCFD services within 12 months of their deaths).
- This brings the **total number of youth under 19 who have died from opioid overdose (Jan. 1, 2016 – Apr. 30, 2017) to 36.** This number has not been reported publicly.
- On June 15, 2017, B.C.'s Provincial Health Officer, Dr. Perry Kendall, wrote a letter to parents urging them to speak openly with their children about substance use: www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/letter_to_parents_and_guardians-talk_to_your_youth_about_substance_use.pdf
- Through the Joint Task Force on Overdose Response, MCFD took the following immediate actions to support and respond to the B.C. opioid crisis:
 - Coordinated overdose awareness and prevention and naloxone training in high-risk communities for front-line practitioners, caregivers and youth at risk: 12 sessions in the Lower Mainland and 13 sessions on Vancouver Island.
 - MCFD Strategic Human Resources issued a provincial directive to all MCFD/Delegated Aboriginal Agency (DAA) staff on minimizing exposure to illegal drugs and opioids on December 21, 2016.
 - A reminder notice was sent to MCFD/DAA staff about the reportable circumstance policy to report incidents of children and youth in care or receiving services that are related to drug overdoses.
 - MCFD tracks reported incidents (as of July 1, 2016) related to drug overdose and/or opioid use of a child, youth or family receiving ministry/DAA services.
 - MCFD participates on a steering committee and two working groups that support the BC Joint Task Force on Overdose Response: Health Steering Committee, Public Engagement Task Working Group and Naloxone Task Working Group.
- In addition, MCFD has developed an *Overdose and Prevention Response Plan* that focuses on how best to support children and families served by MCFD/DAAs who overdose and/or are at risk of overdose. These actions include:
 - Developing a practice guideline to support front-line practitioners in responding to youth at risk and/or parents who may be using illegal opioids;
 - Providing direction on access to and training on naloxone kits for front-line practitioners, caregivers and 'at risk' families;
 - Providing guidance on universal precautions for front-line practitioners and

ADVICE TO MINISTER – CONFIDENTIAL ISSUE NOTE

caregivers;

- Developing an exposure control plan regarding staff precaution and safety;
- Providing general opioid information to staff and caregivers;
- Providing on-going training on opioid awareness and prevention;
- Ongoing monitoring of reported incidents to ensure appropriate practice response;
- The Provincial Director of Child Welfare is conducting a special review of opioid overdoses involving children and youth served by MCFD/DAA's to potentially identify any learning to strengthen the practice response.
- The Ministry of Children and Family Development now invests approximately \$110 million a year to address child and youth mental-health and substance-use challenges in B.C. — this is on top of the \$1.45 billion the Ministry of Health invests annually in these services for all British Columbians.
- As of March 31, 2017, there are a total of 284 beds available in B.C. specifically for children and youth with mental-health and/or substance-use challenges.
- By December 2017, at minimum, another 30 mental-health and substance-use beds for youth will be open throughout the province.
- The Community Action Initiative – an organization that supports projects focused on mental-health and substance-use issues – has partnered with the Centre for Addictions Research of BC (CARBC) to develop several curriculum modules for teachers and resources for parents:
www.uvic.ca/research/centres/carbc/assets/docs/hs-parents-list.pdf

Program Contact: Joanne White 250 613-5906, Cory Heavener
Ministry Contact: Kirsten Youngs 250 858-0555

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CONFIDENTIAL ADVICE TO MINISTER

Issue: Mother risk hair strand testing

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ADVICE TO MINISTER – CONFIDENTIAL ISSUE NOTE

- In March 2016, the ministry launched a Special Review to determine how Motherisk hair-strand testing may have affected child-protection cases.
- This involved the creation of an information-sharing agreement between the Ministry of Children and Family Development and Toronto's Hospital for Sick Kids (given their association with Motherisk) to share names of individuals who have had hair-strand testing – this was completed March 2016. There were 5,727 individual tests that had been conducted between 2005 and 2015 identified.
- Of these tests, there were 2,354 individuals associated with 843 Child Service files; of these 843, there were 126 open Child Service files identified.
- Nineteen files were prioritized for review, as they were identified as Adoption Residency.
- 57 Child Service files were identified with a current legal status of Continuing Custody in December 2016. As the review was approximately six months into its process, an updated legal status review was undertaken, to identify these 57 files.
- The remaining files either no longer had a Continuing Custody order granted, were no longer in scope of the review as they had turned 19, or the legal status had changed and the child was no longer in care.
- The ministry is in the process of completing this review to further determine if hair strand testing was key evidence presented during child protection court processes.
- British Columbia has not ruled out any options for further review and response. What happens nationally, as well as how Ontario's response proceeds, will help to inform that response moving forward.
- Consistent with legal advice, the ministry has not reached out to notify those clients who may have been affected by Motherisk testing; however, the ministry is able to respond should clients raise concerns directly.

Background:

- Motherisk hair-strand testing was originally used in Canada only as a health service to help determine treatment and planning for infants born with drug dependencies.
- In Ontario, cases have come forward where a child protection decision was potentially made by the courts on the sole basis of hair-strand testing through Motherisk.
- The court case in Ontario determined that hair-strand testing through Motherisk is not reliable as a forensic service to determine child protection outcomes.
- Following this case, The Attorney General of Ontario appointed an independent reviewer, the Honorable Susan Lang was asked to complete an independent review into hair strand testing in the Toronto's Hospital for Sick Kids.
- Lang's report delivered in December 2015, determined that there were significant issues in tests that were conducted between the years 2005 to 2015; in part due to the method of testing that the hospital began using in January 2005.
- As such, the report recommended that a review was conducted of all of the results from that period.
- As Motherisk hair-strand testing was used occasionally as part of more extensive

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Motherisk Hair-Strand Testing Updated Oct. 23, 2017

Advice and Recommended Response:

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Key Facts Regarding the Issue:

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child protection investigations in British Columbia, media and the Representative for Children and Youth questioned why British Columbia was not conducting its own review into hair-strand testing.

- British Columbia did not use hair-strand testing as the sole deciding factor in child-protection matters; when the testing was used, it was used rarely and only to provide additional background information for the courts.
- The ministry continues to explore other options for hair-strand drug and alcohol testing.

Program Contact: Sonya Foote; Alex Scheiber

Ministry Contact: Brendan Wright

250 356-2028

ADVICE TO MINISTER – CONFIDENTIAL ISSUE NOTE

**RCY Report on Critical Injuries and Deaths (CID)
(Feb. 1, 2017 – March 31, 2017)**

Nov 7, 2017

Advice and Recommended Response:

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Key Facts Regarding the Issue:

- On November 7, 2017, the Representative for Children and Youth's office will release the report on critical injuries and deaths for the time period of Feb. 1, 2017 to May 31, 2017.
- During this reporting period, 39 deaths and 268 critical injuries of B.C. children and youth who were in care or receiving reviewable services were reported to the RCY.
- Three comprehensive RCY reviews were completed, one of which included several in-mandate critical injuries suffered by one youth.
- Of the 268 injuries, 207 were of children and youth in care, 60 were not in care (but were receiving ministry services) and 1 was of "unknown" care status.
- Of the 39 deaths, 6 were of children or youth in care, 32 were not in care (but were receiving ministry services) and 1 was of "unknown" care status.
- Since June 2007, a total of 999 deaths and 3,455 critical injuries have been reported to the RCY.

Comparison to the same reporting period last year (Feb. 1, 2016 to May 31, 2016):

- During the winter/spring reporting period for 2016, the RCY received reports of 37 deaths and 247 critical injuries.
- Compared to that report, the most current report shows a slight increase (5%) in the number of deaths. Of the 13 deaths categorized as 'Accidental' for the most recent reporting period, 8 appear to have been overdoses – an increase that's likely attributable to fentanyl contamination across drug sources.
- There has also been an 8% increase in critical injuries reported. This is linked to enhanced reporting requirements, expanded reporting criteria, improved training on the reporting process and system improvements (ICM).

RCY Reviews:

- Since March 2011, MCFD has been reporting critical injuries to the RCY in a number of areas that were not historically reported to that office.
- The ministry updated its Reportable Circumstances Policy in June 2015, and ministry staff completed training on the new policy that same month.
- Changes to the policy include expanding the definition of critical injury to include instances of significant emotional harm, and requiring that fatalities and critical injuries of siblings of children receiving services also be reported.
- These changes have been further supported by improvements to the Integrated Case Management System, allowing for more detailed and accurate tracking and reporting.
- The RCY's Office claims that the number of Reportable Circumstances it receives through the ministry has tripled since the new policy was introduced. Ministry records indicate a significant increase – although not triple.
- Critical injuries and deaths that do meet the criteria under the *Representative for Children and Youth Act* proceed to an RCY Review, which examines the

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circumstances and the services delivered to the child.

- This may include examining medical records, ministry case files, relevant policies and standards. As well, consultation with the Coroners Service and discussions with service providers, caregivers and parents may occur.
- The purpose of an RCY Review is to determine if there are service delivery issues or other circumstances that would require an RCY Investigation. Reviews are also aggregated to identify and analyze recurring circumstances or trends, to improve the effectiveness and responsiveness of reviewable services.

Program Contact: Sonya Foote, Cory Heavener, Alex Scheiber

Ministry Contact: Shawn Larabee

Key Messages – Canadian Medical Association Journal – Cedar Project

Date: October 31, 2017

Background: The Canadian Medical Association Journal, an independent journal, will be sending out an embargoed news release on Tuesday, October 31. The release is about research from the Cedar Project that found that Indigenous young people who use drugs in B.C. are 13 times more likely to die than other young Canadians.

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“Clone” Speech Highlights

Highlights:

- The previous government’s June Throne Speech resembled the BCNDP platform more closely than their own election platform.
- Since voting unanimously to pass the Throne Speech, the Opposition has criticized a number of policies it contained.

Quotes:

On electoral reform:

- “With the confidence of this house, your government will enable a third referendum on electoral reform. It will require extensive public consultation to develop a clear question, and will ensure rural representation in the legislature is protected.”

On working across party lines:

- “British Columbians want a stable government, and in sending us this result they expect us to listen and find a way to work together. They expect us to collaborate, while respecting the dignity, rules, and traditions that govern our constitutional monarchy, our democracy, and this legislature.”

On MSP elimination:

- “All parties in this House share the view that MSP should be eliminated. Your government supports a review that considers how this can be done as soon as possible.”

On ridesharing:

- “While all parties in this legislature publicly stated their support for ride sharing in the recent election, your government has heard the message that legitimate implementation concerns remain. Any proposed legislation will be referred to an all-party committee for extensive consultation with the public and stakeholders, in particular regarding boundaries and insurance.”

On eliminating tolls:

- “Your government has heard the concerns of people who are served by tolled provincial highway infrastructure... With the confidence of this house, your government will move to eliminate tolls on the Port Mann Bridge as quickly as possible.”

On reviewing the Massey:

- “An expanded crossing between Richmond and Delta is essential to reducing congestion, ensuring safety, and providing for future light rail. Recognizing concerns about the design, your government will listen and work collaboratively to move this project forward.”

Commitments from the previous government's throne speech:

- Create a new Minister of State for mental health and addictions.
- Place one person in each school trained to identify mental health issues, and who can refer kids to resources.
- Review MSP to consider how it can be eliminated as soon as possible.
- Eliminate tolls on the Port Mann and Golden Ears Bridges.
- Match federal funding for the Mayors Transit Plan.
- Provide fare relief to ferry-dependent communities.
- Consult with the public and stakeholders on ridesharing, and refer any legislation to an all-party committee.
- Review the funding formula for school districts.
- Invest in seismic upgrades and school construction, including funding for playgrounds.
- Fully fund Adult Basic Education and English Language Learning programs.
- Promised free post-secondary education for kids aging out of care.
- Increase monthly social assistance rates by \$100.
- Raise carbon tax \$5/tonne per year from 2019 to 2022 to meet the federal mandate of \$50/tonne.
- Take the Climate Leadership team advice to protect workers and businesses.
- Hire more conservation officers.
- Hold a referendum on proportional representation.
- Ban corporate, union, third party, and out of province donations to political parties.
- Put in place a limit on political donations from individuals.
- Ban funding from federal to provincial political parties.
- Ban loans to parties from organizations other than chartered banks and credit unions.
- Apply provincial electoral reforms to municipal elections.
- Strengthen lobbyist legislation and regulations.
- Consider moving the fixed election date to the fall.
- Continue economic stability dividend.
- Develop a poverty reduction strategy that focuses on children.
- Promised \$1 billion over four years to create new child care spaces including:
 - 60,000 new spaces over 4 years;

- Covering an additional 150,000 children with full or partial childcare subsidies; and
 - Funding up to 4,000 new early childhood educators with \$10 million in grants and bursaries.
- Explore co-location of childcare spaces in elementary schools.
- Double funding for the BC Arts Council.
- End the fixed-term lease loophole, and protect tenants' rights when landlords make improvements to rentals.

Affordability

Background:

- *The budget update includes funding to remove tuition for ABE and ELL, to cut MSP premiums in half, to remove tolls on the Port Mann and Golden Ears bridges, and to lower the small business tax rate to 2 percent.*

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Accomplishments

Background:

- BC's NDP government was sworn in on July 18, 2017.
- This is a list of accomplishments achieved since that time.

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BC Liberals on BC Liberal Government

Quotes:

- "We were preaching at people from 30,000 feet. Telling them about credit ratings, telling them about our debt-to-GDP ratio. It meant nothing in their living rooms. The NDP were in their living rooms offering them a cheaper way of life." Andrew Wilkinson, October 15
- "People are living with two income families from pay cheque to pay cheque. We've got to understand that and provide a better solution right here in the Lower Mainland." Andrew Wilkinson, October 15
- "We lost that election because we stopped listening." Diane Watts, October 15
- "In this last election we didn't get it all right. We didn't speak the language that resonated with enough folks in the Lower Mainland and their issues of affordability and housing, child care and transportation." Todd Stone, October 15
- "There was too much tension. Too much political calculation. We need to stop telling local communities and regions what is best for them. We need to start engaging with them to improve places where we live, work and play." Todd Stone, Oct 10.

A complete list of the B.C. Liberal's opposition critics:

- Advanced education — Stephanie Cadieux and Simon Gibson
 - Agriculture — Norm Letnick and Ian Paton
 - Attorney general — Andrew Wilkinson
 - Liquor, gaming and ICBC — John Yap
 - Children and family development — Laurie Throness
 - Childcare — Linda Larson
 - Citizens' services — Steve Thomson
 - Education — Mary Polak and Dan Davies
 - Energy and mines — Tom Shypitka
 - B.C. Hydro — Darryl Plecas
 - Natural gas and petroleum resources — Ellis Ross
 - Environment and climate change — Peter Milobar
 - Finance — Shirley Bond and Tracy Redies
 - Forests, lands and natural resource operations — John Rustad
 - Rural development — Donna Barnett
 - Health — Mike Bernier and Joan Isaacs
 - Indigenous relations — Dan Ashton
 - Jobs, trade and technology — Greg Kylo and Jas Johal
 - Trade — Teresa Wat and Steve Thomson
 - Labour — John Martin
 - Mental health and addictions — Jane Thornthwaite
 - Municipal affairs — Todd Stone
 - Housing — Sam Sullivan
 - Public safety and solicitor general — Mike Morris
 - Social development and poverty reduction — Marvin Hunt
 - Tourism, arts and culture — Michelle Stilwell and Doug Clovechok
 - Transportation and infrastructure — Jordan Sturdy and Michael Lee
 - Small business — Coralee Oakes
-
- Caucus chair — Jackie Tegart
 - House leader — Mike de Jong
 - Whip — Eric Foster
 - Deputy whip — Linda Larson



CONFIDENTIAL ADVICE TO MINISTER –
FIRST CALL CHILD POVERTY REPORT

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4. **P** The provincial government should expand the **post-secondary** program options eligible for support under the Single Parent Employment Initiative and, in the absence of enhancements to BC's refundable post-secondary grants, allow all those on income assistance to retain benefits while attending a post-secondary institution.
5. **P** The provincial government should redesign the BC Early Childhood Tax Benefit into a **BC Child Benefit** covering children under 18 and double the maximum benefit to \$1,320 per child per year.
6. **F** The federal government should ensure the new **Canada Child Benefit** reduces the child poverty rate by 50% in four years and ensure access to the benefit for families living at higher rates of poverty.
7. **F** The federal government should create a targeted **GST credit** top-up of \$1,800 per adult and child for those living below the poverty line.
8. **F P** Guided by the commitments in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People including their right to self-determination, the calls to action in the report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, and in compliance with the rulings of the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal, the federal and provincial governments should immediately increase funding for **First Nations** child welfare, education and community health services and services for urban Indigenous people, and develop a long-term poverty eradication strategy in collaboration with First Nations and other Indigenous organizations and communities.
9. **F P** The provincial government should implement the **\$10aDay Child Care Plan**, put forward by the Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC and the Early Childhood Educators of BC, to establish universal access to a system of high-quality, inclusive child care for BC children and families that is fee free for families with annual incomes of less than \$40,000, will increase the number of new licensed child care spaces by 22,500 spaces in 3 years and will ensure early childhood educators are paid a living wage. The federal government should support this initiative with a national early childhood education and care program which includes a well-developed policy framework based on the same principles, is guided by targets and timelines and supported by long-term, sustained funding. Both the provincial and federal plans should respect the rights of Indigenous communities to be supported to develop and deliver their own culturally relevant and traditional language-based programs.
10. **F** The federal government should increase the **maternity and parental** leave benefit level to 70% of employment income and reduce qualifying hours to 300 over the best 12 weeks of the last 12 months of work. All new parents (regardless of work status) should be included, and a secondary caregiver benefit should be developed to address gender disparities in care work within households.
11. **P L** Working in collaboration with **youth in and from government care**, the provincial government should establish an inter-ministerial action plan to ensure all youth aging out of care can count on consistent financial support for basic living costs and needed supports and services, such as mental health services and connections to their cultures, and long-term relationships with caring, dependable adults for support, advice and references, until the age of 25. Their post-secondary education should be supported without limits on age or their time in care. Provincial and local governments should ensure all youth aging out of care have a chance to connect and contribute to their communities through creative, cultural and volunteer activities, so that they feel like they belong.