

## AUGUST 2007 STATUS REPORT

### CHANGES FOR CHILDREN IMPLEMENTATION TEAM PROGRESS REPORT

#### Background

In March 2006, the Minister of Family Services and Housing commissioned two external reviews into the child and family services (CFS) system in Manitoba as a result of a tragic child death. An internal Section 4 report was also completed. These reviews are: *Strengthening The Commitment – An External Review of the Child Welfare System* (Office of the Ombudsman, September 2006), *Honouring Their Spirits – The Child Death Review: A report to the Minister of Family Services and Housing* (Manitoba Children's Advocate, September 2006) and *Recommendations – A Special Case Review in Regard to the Death of Phoenix Sinclair* (Koster, Schibler, & Manitoba Children's Advocate, September 2006).

In response to these reports, Manitoba Family Services and Housing announced a package of new strategic initiatives entitled *Changes for Children: Strengthening the Commitment to Child Welfare*, and committed an initial allocation of over \$42 million to begin implementation of these recommendations. An additional \$6.1 million was committed to strengthen Manitoba's foster care system.

The plan included the formation of an Implementation Team (IT), comprised of two external co-chairs, Dr. Catherine Cook and Mr. Reg Toews, the Chief Executive Officers of the four Child and Family Services Authorities, the Director of Child and Family Services and the Managing Director of the Strategic Initiatives and Program Support Branch, to oversee the implementation of the Changes for Children recommendations. Additionally, an Implementation Staff Team (IST), comprised of representation from the four CFS Authorities and the Child Protection Branch was formed to support the work of the IT.

The IT was also asked to oversee many of the recommendations from two additional reviews of the CFS system, released in the fall of 2006. The first of these reviews was undertaken by the Office of the Auditor General and examined the policies and procedures that were in place in the CFS division prior to devolution. The second review, *Strengthening Our Youth – Their Journey to Competence and Independence* (McKuen-Morris & Manitoba Children's Advocate, November 2006) focused on the services and supports provided to youth who leave the child welfare system at age 18.

In total, the IT is tasked with implementing 289 separate recommendations to improve the child and family service system. To facilitate and guide their work, the Implementation Team has developed a vision statement and a set of 12 principles that guide the development of all of the Changes for Children initiatives. At a minimum, the IT has determined that all plans must be consistent with the following two foundational principles:

- Demonstrate respect for the spirit, intent and longer term objectives of the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry – Child Welfare Initiative; and
- Demonstrate how the capacity of the child and family service system will be strengthened and ensure that vulnerable children, youth, families and communities who require, or are likely to require, service are the primary beneficiaries.

### **Implementation Team**

Since the last progress report in April 2007, the Implementation Team has continued to meet on a weekly basis to develop plans and to make decisions designed to move the Changes for Children initiatives forward. Minutes from each meeting are kept and approved by the full team. The Implementation Staff Team's primary work has been focused on preparing background documents and planning materials for approval by IT.

### **Changes for Children Consolidated Work Plan**

In this reporting period, one of the main areas of focus for the IT has been the ongoing development of a Consolidated Work Plan.

IT has made significant progress towards the completion of the Plan. As a first step, the IST has completed the categorization, by common work theme, of all of the 289 recommendations into 20 distinct work projects. Many of these work projects have related sub-projects. An initial listing appeared in the April status report. An updated listing of the consolidated work plan projects and sub-projects is attached at the end of this report.

The next phase of the Consolidated Work Plan is well underway including the development of detailed work plans for each work project and sub-project. Many of the work projects now have completed work plans in place. The remaining detailed work plans will be completed by a number of Design and Work Plan Development Teams, who will be asked to develop detailed action steps and time frames for the following work projects:

- Strengthening our Youth;
- Strengthening Foster Care;
- Promoting Positive Outcomes for Children and Youth in Care;
- Intersectoral Partnerships;

- Training, Workshops and New Information;
- Enhanced Communication; and
- Standards, Protocols and Directives.

The Design and Work Plan Development Teams will include a core group of representatives from each Authority and/or Authority Agencies, the Child Protection Branch, Strategic Initiatives and Support as well as other key stakeholders.

The establishment of Design and Work Plan Development Teams will provide an opportunity for a wide range of staff and other stakeholders to participate in, and lend their experience to, the Changes for Children initiatives. The purpose and scope of the work has been articulated in Statements of Work for all of the Teams.

All of the work of the Teams must be submitted to the Implementation Team for approval before proceeding with implementation and before funding from the Changes for Children budget can be allocated. It is anticipated that the Consolidated Work Plan will be completed in 2008 when the Design and Work Plan Development Teams have completed their work. When completed, the Plan will be a key vehicle for developing, organizing, prioritizing, and tracking the Changes for Children initiatives related to the implementation of the 289 recommendations.

### **Changes for Children Activities and Decisions**

In conjunction with the development of the Consolidated Work Plan, the IT has implemented a number of initiatives which address many of the external review recommendations. IT is also actively working on a number of additional initiatives and activities designed to move forward the changes to the child and family service system.

#### ***Workload Relief***

The external reviews confirmed that high workload is one of the most significant challenges facing the current CFS system. As a result, the Implementation Team identified workload relief as the highest priority for action.

The Implementation Team supports a multi-faceted approach to achieving workload relief. This approach includes:

- The hiring of additional front line child and family service workers which will result in a gradual reduction of caseloads and the hiring of additional support staff to ensure that social workers are spending less time on administrative tasks;
- Improvements to the Child and Family Services Information System (CFSIS) and the Intake Module which will result in a more efficient and

user-friendly system, resulting in front-line staff having increased time available to spend on direct service work;

- In the longer term, it is anticipated that the implementation of a province-wide Differential Response model will decrease the volume of cases by offering vulnerable families real service alternatives and prevent the need for opening a child protection case; and
- Work is underway to establish a dedicated team to develop a new funding model.

Since the last progress report in April 2007, the highlights of the workload relief initiatives include:

### ***Hiring of New Staff***

- As recommended, workload relief funds were distributed to CFS Agencies via their Authorities in the last reporting period. Since that time, Agencies have made considerable progress towards hiring new front-line staff, specifically to reduce the high workload demands on front-line child protection workers. Also, in accordance with the recommendations, agencies have used the funds to hire a variety of different staff depending on the source of the workload pressure such as professional caseworkers, resource aides and/or administrative staff.
- As of August 1, 2007 a total of 64 staff, including front line workers, administrative support staff and supervisors have been hired by the Authorities.
- The remainder of the workload relief funding will be distributed upon completion of the Designated Intake Agency volume review expected to be completed in early fall. Workload relief funding available for distribution in 2007/08 (\$5 million) will be annualized beginning in 2008/09.

### ***Child and Family Services Information System (CFSIS) Incremental Improvements***

- Suggestions for incremental improvements to the CFS Applications (CFSIS and the Intake Module) were collected from a range of staff that use the applications, including front-line workers and supervisors. IT prioritized 10 improvement projects using a process that considered the impact of each suggested improvement on increasing child safety, reducing workload, improving ease of use and improving access to information. During this reporting period IT agreed on the following incremental enhancements:
  - Streamlining the capacity for province-wide direct access to CFSIS cases while also enhancing security;
  - Streamlining the capacity for province-wide access to the Intake Module;
  - Streamlining access to electronic case recordings;
  - Allowing for workers to designate case notes as final;

- Ensuring children with medical risks are clearly identified;
- Increasing the capacity to record medical information;
- Ensuring there is a clear display of the name when conducting a prior contact check;
- Increasing the accuracy of results when searching for a case/persons;
- Building the capacity to automatically copy the “household status” from the Intake Module to CSFIS when IM creates a case in CSFIS; and
- Building the capacity to display foster home license expiry dates and advance notice of upcoming expired licenses.

The number of prioritized projects that are able to be completed will be dependent on the scope of each work project. Work began on the incremental enhancements in July 2007. The first set of improvements will include the provision of province wide direct access to CFSIS cases and to the Intake Module.

- Authorities are in the process of entering all open cases (Federal and Provincial) into CFSIS.
- Progress has been made to solve current connectivity problems experienced by some agency offices when trying to utilize CFS Applications.

### ***Child and Family Services Information System (CFSIS) Re-Design***

- While the CFSIS improvements address a number of the recommendations made in the external reviews, and are expected to have a positive impact on CFSIS users and child safety, other issues and deficiencies regarding CFSIS, identified in the external reviews, are more complicated to resolve. With this in mind a Request for Proposals (RFP) has been approved by the IT to begin the process of re-designing CFSIS. This CFSIS “re-engineering” project will address more complicated information technology issues and will also be a means of developing an information system that supports the vision for a prevention/differential response to children and families. The re-engineered system will also be more clearly based on a case management model of service provision. The re-engineering is comprehensive and is expected to take a number of years to complete.
- The first step or phase in this process, the issuance of an RFP, has been taken. A number of firms have expressed interest. The selection process is expected to require approximately four months in total before the project can get underway. The Project is targeted to begin in October 2007.
- A Child and Family Services Applications Users Advisory Group will be established in the fall and will be comprised of users of the child and family service applications from Authorities, Authority agencies, the Child Protection Branch and the Information Technology Branch. The Advisory

Group will identify issues related to these applications, will represent the concerns of users, and will provide advice regarding improvements and re-design.

### ***Differential Response***

During the last reporting period, IT has prioritized the planning for a Differential Response (DR) given the importance placed on this initiative in the external reviews.

- Each Authority is well underway with implementing the first phase of a plan to educate and promote a DR model. Representatives from each of the Authority Agencies have been involved in presentations and interactive workshops. Community collaterals have also expressed interest in a DR model. The IST has delivered presentations regarding the Changes for Children work and DR to:
  - Office of the Ombudsman;
  - Office of the Children’s Advocate;
  - Manitoba Children’s Agenda Leadership Committee;
  - Regional Health Authorities;
  - Community Service Delivery staff;
  - Executive Directors of Knowles Centre, Marymount, Macdonald Youth Services, New Directions for Children, Youth and Families; and
  - The Council of Coalitions.
- Authorities are actively planning for Phase Two of the DR roll-out, which will provide opportunities for in-depth discussions about how best to plan, implement and evaluate DR in each Authority.
- Research on best practice differential response models continues, including a site visit to Alberta by the Co-Chairs and the Changes for Children Coordinator to discuss Alberta’s DR model and the lessons learned when introducing the model in their province.
- A conference, “Achieving Better Outcomes for Children, Youth and Families,” is being planned for 2008, in both Winnipeg and Northern Manitoba. Differential response will be the primary focus for the two 1-day symposia. The conferences will provide information on planning, implementation and evaluation of DR models, with opportunities for participants to attend interactive workshops to discuss the potential for differential response in Manitoba.

### ***Enhanced Communication***

- One of the themes that emerged from the external reviews was the need for more effective communication within and between systems that provide service to children and families.

- Resources have been approved for two, 1-day symposia to be held in Winnipeg and in The Pas in late November. The conferences are designed to respond to a number of external review recommendations regarding communication by providing opportunities for dialogue and networking between child and family service staff and key external stakeholders (including the media). Conference topics will include information on the history of child welfare and the current trends, an overview of the AJI-CWI, the Changes for Children agenda and panel presentations discussing media and politics in relation to the child and family services system. IT has contracted with an event planner to organize and coordinate these symposia as well as the 2008 DR conference. A Conference Planning Group has been established to work with the event planner.
- A Communications Sub-Committee has been formed, comprised of representatives from the four CFS Authorities and the Child Protection Branch to ensure that ongoing communication is delivered in timely and clear fashion to a wide audience. A central task of this committee will be the development of ongoing staff updates that will be disseminated to all CFS staff.

### ***Intersectoral Partnerships***

In accordance with the external reviews, IT recognizes that substantial and long lasting improvements to the child and family service system cannot be made without increased inter-system collaboration and partnerships with external service providers, families and communities. To this end IT has been engaged in a number of activities to promote intersectoral partnerships including:

- The establishment of an Interim Child Welfare Intersectoral Committee (Interim CWIC), which will have its first meeting in September. Each Authority has named a representative to the committee. The primary purpose of the committee is to ensure that key intersectoral partners, who have expertise related to the intersectoral recommendations made in the external reviews, are invited to participate in the development of detailed work plans. The Interim CWIC will also coordinate all of the Intersectoral Sub-Project Design and Work Plan Development Team(s) related to the Intersectoral Partnership Project, provide support to the Team(s), and may participate in the work of these Team(s) as required.
- IT has had a number of meetings with the Department of Health to discuss how the Changes for Children suicide prevention work can intersect with and complement the Provincial Suicide Prevention Strategy.
- Two IST members sit on the Integrated Service Delivery Advisory Group (ISAG) to allow for a formal link and collaboration between the two initiatives. Some common themes between the two initiatives have been identified: the presence of service streams or paths (differential response); increased collaboration across service sectors; enhancement

of information systems; and the need for a comprehensive assessment framework.

### ***FASD Initiatives***

- Manitoba Family Services and Housing, in collaboration with Changes for Children, announced a \$7.5 million commitment targeted toward enhancing Manitoba's FASD strategy. As part of this framework, the IT is planning for a number of FASD initiatives that will focus on enhancing and developing specific initiatives for children and families involved in the child and family services system. These initiatives include:
  - The establishment of two FASD Design and Work Plan Development Teams. The purpose of the first team will be to: consult broadly with FASD experts throughout the province and in other jurisdictions, develop draft service standards using the guidelines outlined in the Standards Development Protocol based on best practice service model(s); identify outcomes; and identify the resources required to implement the standards. The Team will begin in the fall of 2007 and is expected to complete its work by March 2008;
  - The second team's purpose will be to develop work plans regarding the balance of the Provincial Coordinated FASD Strategy including; the expansion of the successful Stop FASD program to three rural and/or northern communities; Increased research to guide the development of new policies and programs.
  - A new resource centre called "Spectrum Connections" will be established to assist youth with FASD who are transitioning out of the foster care system and young adults in supported or independent living; IT collaborated with Family Services and Housing's Disability Programs on an RFP and expect that a service provider will be identified mid-fall

### ***Suicide Prevention***

- A significant portion of the newly established Interim Child Welfare Intersectoral Committee's work (see also 'Intersectoral Partnerships') will be to plan for and implement the recommendations related to suicide prevention, through consultation with system experts and coordination of Design and Work Plan Development Teams. This intersectoral initiative has been prioritized by IT and will begin in September 2007.
- Print resources aimed at suicide prevention have been provided to Authorities for distribution to their Agencies.
- By October 2007, all Authorities will have an in-house capacity to deliver suicide prevention training to child and family service staff using the Applied Suicide Skills Intervention Training (ASIST) model.

### ***External Reporting Relationships***

- A formal process for providing regular updates to the Office of the Ombudsman and the Office of the Children's Advocate has continued throughout this reporting period. The next meetings are scheduled with these offices in early September 2007.

### ***PHIA/FIPPA/CFS Act Interface***

- A working group comprised of the Access and Privacy Coordinator for Family Services and Housing, a representative from the Strategic Initiatives and Program Support Branch, and three representatives from the Changes for Children Implementation Staff Team have been meeting over this reporting period to clarify how *PHIA/FIPPA/Child and Family Services Acts* relate to each other. This information will be summarized into an information fact sheet for CFS workers and external collaterals. A training module, as well as the development of a cross-departmental protocol on the "duty to report," and a strategy to disseminate this protocol will follow.

### ***Creation of a Permanent Structure under the direction of Standing Committee***

- Work is underway to transition the IST to a new permanent structure in response to the external recommendations that highlight the need for a 'secretariat' whose purpose is to support the collaborative governance structure of the child and family services system.
- A model has been agreed to by Standing Committee subject to Leadership Council approval.
- In preparation for the implementation of the new model, the Changes for Children Implementation Staff team (IST) moved to 202-150 Henry Avenue on July 18<sup>th</sup>, 2007 (Tel.: 204-956-5242). The Metis Authority will act as a host for this office. Staff of the IST will serve a transition function until the new model has been implemented.

### ***Staff and Youth Engagement***

- The four Authorities have agreed on a joint resolution as part of a broader strategy which commits to the establishment of Staff and Youth Engagement structures within each Authority to enhance communication. A commitment has also been made to allocate funds to support these structures. This initiative will provide an ongoing opportunity for CFS staff at all levels and youth to receive information and to provide feedback on proposed CFS system initiatives.

- IT and the MGEU met and have agreed upon a structure for an ongoing relationship. As part of a broader strategy to engage staff, two Child Welfare Staff Representative Consultation Committees will be created. Terms of Reference are currently being drafted for these committees. One Committee will be co-chaired by an MGEU Representative and the CEO of the General Authority and the second Committee will be co-chaired by an MGEU Representative and the CEO of the Southern First Nations Authority. The Committees are being established to enhance communication between management, front line staff and the union by creating an ongoing opportunity for information sharing and for staff feedback regarding the development of the Changes for Children and other CFS initiatives.

### ***Strengthening Foster Care***

- Since the last progress report in April 2007, the three teams formed to strengthen the foster care system continued their work to recruit new foster parents and develop placement resources and supports for families. Much of their focus was on the elimination of, except in exceptional circumstances, the use of hotels as a placement option. As of July 31, 2007, the Authorities and their foster care teams were able to report that alternative placements had been located for all children and there were no children placed in hotels.
- Planning is actively underway to develop additional short and long term resources to sustain this accomplishment. As of August 2007, 493 new bed spaces for children had been developed and the foster parent recruitment telephone line continues to receive calls from citizens interested in becoming foster parents.
- A project proposal has been developed by Standing Committee to implement a standardized rate structure by January 2008. A project lead has been identified and a charter has been developed. The new rate structure model will be linked to the larger funding model work referenced above.

### ***Youth Transitioning Out of Care***

- IT is planning initiatives specifically targeted for youth involved with the child and family service system. These initiatives include the development of a Vision Catcher Fund which will provide youth with financial support for post-secondary education, apprentice programs and the development of special talents and a Mentorship Program which will provide an opportunity for youth leaving care to be mentored by other youth who have successfully aged out of the child and family service system.

### ***Training, Workshops, and New Information***

- The Training Working Group (a partnership between Changes for Children and the Joint Training Unit) meets regularly to prioritize and finalize work plans related to the recommendations regarding training.
- The working group has prioritized the completion of detailed work plans for the following training initiatives:
  - Critical Incident Stress Management;
  - Abuse training;
  - Orientation for new child and family services staff; and
  - Inclusion of anti-oppressive and anti-racist principles within a strength based perspective in the Competency Based Training modules.
- In response to the child death review, distribution of best practice information on water safety, including brochures and pamphlets from the Lifesaving Society of Manitoba, Canadian Red Cross, Safe Kids Canada, and “Swim to Survive” training to foster parents and care providers throughout the province has been initiated. The Joint Training Unit is now considering how best to offer water safety training that will highlight and expand upon the information provided.

### ***Federal/Provincial Jurisdictional Issues / Funding Equity***

- Discussions continue regarding the issue of federal-provincial jurisdiction. There is a commitment by all parties to continue to discuss ways to move forward on resolving inequalities that currently exist for First Nations children and families.
- Two meetings involving the political leadership and two meetings of officials have taken place; a process is being established to ensure that Differential Response is equitably developed on and off reserve; these meetings also included discussions regarding Jordan’s Principle; the Manitoba government recently announced that it would move forward on applying Jordan’s Principle if the federal government followed suit.

**Changes for Children**  
**Consolidated Work Plan – Projects and Sub-Projects**

<b>PROJECTS</b> (Note: an asterisk means the project has been identified by IT as a priority)	<b>SUB-PROJECTS</b>
*1.0 CFSIS	1.1 Connectivity, Support and Incremental Enhancements 1.2 Renewal/Re-engineering
*2.0 Differential Response	2.1 DR Concept Paper 2.2 Authority Infrastructure Requirements 2.3 Promotional/Educational Presentation 2.4 Summary Paper on DR models 2.5 Summary Paper on Assessment Tools 2.6 Demonstration Sites 2.7 Standards/Protocol Development 2.8 Training 2.9 Service Protocols 2.10 Legislation 2.11 Evaluation Framework 2.12 Conference: “Achieving Better Outcomes for Children, Youth and Families”
*3.0 Developing Standards, Protocols or Directives	3.1 Standards/Protocols 3.2 Directives
*4.0 Enhanced Communication	4.1 External Communication Strategy 4.2 Internal Communication Strategy
*5.0 Intersectoral Partnerships	5.1 Establishment of the permanent Child Welfare Intersectoral Committee 5.2 Services for Children With Complex Medical needs 5.3 Children's Mental Health and Suicide Prevention 5.4 Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder 5.5 Addictions 5.6 Promoting Healthy Child Development 5.7 FASD Best Practice Models and Standards Development
*6. 0 Promoting Positive Outcomes for Children in Care	6. 1 Promoting Positive Outcomes for Children in Care
*7.0 Strengthening Foster Care	7.1 Recruitment and Development 7.2 Funding Strategies to Support Foster Families 7.3 Standardization of Special Rates

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>PROJECTS</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">(Note: an asterisk means the project has been identified by IT as a priority)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>SUB-PROJECTS</b></p>
*8.0 Strengthening Youth	8.1 Youth In Transition 8.2 Youth Education/Career Development 8.3 Health and Mental Health 8.4 Training
*9.0 Training, Workshops and New Information	9.1 Training in Foundational standards 9.2 Specialized training in Abuse Investigations 9.3 Transfer Documentation Standards 9.4 Orientation/Refresher for CFS Staff 9.5 Compilation and Distribution of Educational Materials 9.6 Developing New Training Curricula
10.0 Workload Relief	10.1 Staffing 10.2 Designated Intake Agency Review 10.3 ADP Review
11.0 All Nations Coordinated Response Network (ANCR)	11.1 Response to ANCR recommendations
12.0 Standing Committee Office	12.1 Standing Committee Office
13.0 Enhanced Supports for Front line Workers	13.1 Mentoring & Peer Support 13.2 Critical Incident Stress Management 13.3 Safety Planning and De-escalation
14.0 New Funding Model	14.1 New Funding Model
15.0 PHIA/FIPPA/CFS Act Interface	15.1 Education and Training 15.2 Protocol Development
16.0 Policy Decisions	16. 1 Policy Decisions
17.0 Quality Assurance Framework	17.1 Quality Assurance Framework
18.0 Quality Assurance Priorities	18.1 Quality Assurance Priorities
19.0 Section 4 Recommendations	19.1 Section 4 Recommendations
20.0 Study the Feasibility of New Service Models	20.1 Study the Feasibility of New Service Models