

For Immediate Release

Child and Youth Advocate's Investigation of Mental Health Services Ongoing

The Child and Youth Advocate, Darlene Neville, today responded to concerns expressed in the media that she has not been fulfilling her mandate to advocate for a youth who is presently an inpatient at the Waterford Hospital.

Neville confirmed that the Investigation into the December 2008 closure of Unit J4D at the Janeway, the only inpatient psychiatric unit in the Province for children and youth, is currently underway and is the number one priority for the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate. While she recognizes the public has a strong interest in the outcome of this Investigation, Neville stated that she cannot comment on the Investigation until the process is completed. The report of the Investigation, including its findings and recommendations, will be publicly released.

In response to recent comments in the media concerning individual cases, Neville confirmed that her mandate is to protect and advance the rights and interests of children and youth within the Province. Discussing details of ongoing treatment of any youth in the public forum would not only constitute a violation of the privacy rights of the youth but could also jeopardize ongoing treatment. For this reason, Neville is not prepared to discuss individual cases in the media.

The Advocate stated that her position that youth should be treated in appropriate child and youth facilities has been clearly stated and communicated to the relevant authorities. Neville confirmed, however, that the Child and Youth Advocate has no authority to require Eastern Health or any other Health Authority or its physicians to admit, treat, transfer or discharge any patient.

For further information, please contact Shirley Prior, Office of the Child and Youth Advocate, at 709-753-3636.

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