

Office of the Child and Youth Advocate

December 5, 2017

Child and Youth Advocate Responds to Amendments to the *Child and Youth Advocate Act*

The tabling of legislative amendments providing for mandatory reporting of deaths and critical injuries marks a significant development for advocacy services for children and youth in Newfoundland and Labrador. Proposed amendments to the *Child and Youth Advocate Act* will require the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development, and the Department of Justice and Public Safety to report all child and youth deaths and critical injuries to the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate. This will apply to children and youth in care, protective intervention, kinship, youth services, and youth corrections programs, as well as children and youth at the Newfoundland and Labrador Youth Centre, or temporarily housed in correctional holding facilities.

The Child and Youth Advocate, Jackie Lake Kavanagh, stated “Many children and youth who are in the care, protection or custody of government face the unique vulnerability of lacking the natural advocates and supports of their families. Increased oversight and advocacy services for these children and youth is needed to ensure their rights are protected. Mandatory reporting will create an automatic notification to ensure this can occur.” The existing legislation already enables the Office to inquire, review, or investigate any matter related to the rights and well-being of children and youth, regardless of whether a complaint is received. This authority remains unchanged, and will be enhanced because of the mandatory notification requirements for the most vulnerable children in the system.

The Child and Youth Advocate recognizes the collective effort of all involved in developing this important legislative proposal.

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