

MINISTER'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE
for the
CHILD YOUTH and FAMILY SERVICES ACT

ACTIVITY REPORT
2007-2008

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR:

Pursuant to the *Transparency and Accountability Act*, the Minister's Advisory Committee (MAC) will report as a Category Three government entity. I am pleased to provide the Activity Report for the Minister's Advisory Committee (MAC) for the fiscal year, April 2007 – March 2008. The Minister's Advisory Committee is a legislated committee under Section 75 of the *Child, Youth and Family Services Act*. This Committee is appointed by the Minister and is responsible to review the operations of *The Act* and report to the Minister on whether, in its opinion, the principles and purpose are being achieved.

This Activity Report provides an overview of the MAC during the past fiscal year and identifies accomplishments for this reporting period. In the development of this report, careful consideration was given to the strategic directions of government, as communicated by the responsible minister. My signature below is indicative of the committee's accountability for the preparation of this report and the achievement of results.

Sincerely,



Mr. Des Dillon (Chair)
Minister's Advisory Committee

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1.0 MAC Overview

On January 5, 2000, the *Child, Youth and Family Services Act (CYFS Act)* was proclaimed. Accountability for interventions under the new Act is provided through a number of statutory provisions. One of these accountability statutes is Section 75 of the *Child, Youth and Family Services Act* which provides for the establishment of a Minister's Advisory Committee (MAC).

This is the second committee appointed under the legislation to conduct the review of the operations of the *CYFS Act*. The work of the first committee concluded on December 5, 2005 with the tabling of the final report into the House of Assembly by the Minister.

The committee meets as required and can range from monthly to every other month depending on the work plan. The committee is not required to have an audited financial statement. The Department of Health and Community Services covers travel and other associated costs for the work of this committee. A program consultant at the Department provides support to the Committee.

2.0 Committee Membership

Representation on this advisory committee is appointed in accordance with Section 75 (2) of the Act. The MAC has representation from across the province and is comprised of a maximum of 10 individuals, who have a particular interest and expertise in children's issues. Membership for this reporting period is as follows:

Des Dillon	Chair; appointed under Section 75 (2) (f) as a community representative
Vacant	appointed under Section 75 (2) (d) as the legal aid lawyer representative
Michelle Sullivan	appointed under Section 75(2) (f) as a representative from Memorial University's School of Social Work
Karen Mitchell	appointed under Section 75(2) (a) as a consumer representative
Brian Lyall	appointed under Section 75(2) (e) as a representative from a cultural minority

Lewis Coles	appointed under Section 75(2) (b) as the representative from a health board
Ivy Burt	appointed under Section 75(2) (c) as a representative of the Minister
Mary Bungay-Gaultois	appointed under Section 75(2) (f) as a community representative
Vacant	There is currently one (1) vacancy to be filled under Section 75(2) (a) for a consumer representative.
Vacant	There is currently one (1) vacancy to be filled under Section 75(2) (e) for a person representing a cultural, linguistic or racial minority group.

3.0 Financial Statement

The committee is not required to have an audited financial statement. The Department of Health and Community Services covers travel and other associated costs for the work of this committee.

The following outlines the expenditures for activities in 2007-08:

Travel	\$ 3,013.00
Supplies	\$ 303.46
Professional Services	n/a
Purchased Services	\$ 150.00
Total:	\$3,466.46

4.0 Mandate

In accordance with Section 75 (1) of the *Child Youth and Family Services Act*, the following mandate has been set out for the Minister's Advisory Committee.

"The Minister shall establish an advisory committee whose function is to review every two years, the operations of this Act and to report to the Minister concerning its operation and stating whether, in its opinion, the principles and purpose of the Act are being achieved."

5.0 Primary Clients

The primary client of the Minister's Advisory Committee is the Minister of Health and Community Services in accordance with Section 75 of the *CYFS Act*.

6.0 Vision

In 2007-08, the MAC adopted the vision of the Department of Health and Community Services that individuals, families, and communities achieve optimal health and well being. While the committee still broadly supports the departmental 2007 vision, we have now developed our own which is more in line with the mandate of the committee.

The vision of the Minister's Advisory Committee is that all children are healthy, valued and respected and where families and communities are supported to create safe, nurturing environments.

A complete version of the DHCS Strategic Plan and information on the DHCS values and vision can be found at <http://www.health.gov.nl.ca/health> or by contacting 709-729-4984.

7.0 Values

In the 2007-08 Transition Activity Plan, MAC adopted the values of the DHCS. While MAC continues to support these values, in June 2008, MAC developed its own Committee values as part of the 2008-11 Activity Plan. Because of their relevance and currency, they are included below:

Our central philosophy is to promote the safety, health and well-being of children, youth & families with the best interest of the child being paramount. The core values of the MAC are founded in the general principles defined in Section 7 of *The Child Youth and Family Services Act*. These principles are as follows:

- the overriding and paramount consideration in any decision made under this Act shall be the best interests of the child
- every child is entitled to be assured of personal safety, health and well-being
- the family is the basic unit of society responsible for the safety, health and well-being of the child
- the community has a responsibility to support the safety, health and well-being of a child and may require assistance in fulfilling this responsibility

- prevention activities are integral to the promotion of the safety, health and well-being of a child
- kinship ties are integral to a child's self-development and growth and if a child's safety, health and well-being cannot be assured in the context of the family, the extended family shall be encouraged to care for the child provided that a director can be assured that the child's safety, health and well-being will not be at risk
- the cultural heritage of a child shall be respected and connections with a child's cultural heritage shall be preserved
- in the absence of evidence to the contrary, there shall be a presumption that a child 12 years of age or over is capable of forming and expressing an opinion regarding his or her care and custody

The MAC will demonstrate these guiding principles through the following core values:

Integrity	We are committed to ensuring recommendations that are based on review processes, findings and evidence.
Collaboration	We are committed to making every effort to create opportunities for input and participation of individuals, groups, organizations and communities in the review process.
Privacy	We are committed to ensuring that sensitive information is held in confidence and is shared only with those who need to know and is treated with care and responsibility.

8.0 Mission

As a category 3 government entity, the MAC has the option of adopting the mission of the Department of Health and Community Services or developing its own. The 2007-08 Transitional Activity Plan that applies to the 2007-08 reporting period identifies the function of the committee which is to review every two years, the operations of the *CYFS Act* and submit a report to the Minister on whether in its opinion, the principles and purpose of the legislation are being achieved. The MAC report will outline the processes utilized to reach the conclusions and recommendations. This report will then be tabled in the House of Assembly.

By March 31, 2011, the MAC will have submitted a report to the Minister of Health and Community Services on whether the principles and purpose of the Child Youth and Family Services legislation are being achieved.

Measure: Report submitted to the Minister

Indicators:

- Completed review on the operations of the CYFS Act
- Advised the Minister on the outcomes of the review process, through the use of a report

Indicator	Results
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed review on the operations of the CYFS Act 	Work is ongoing towards completion of this report.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advised the Minister on the outcomes of the review process through the use of a report 	Minister is updated to advise of progress being made by the committee in meeting its mandate

Note:

For an updated statement on the mission of the CYFS Minister's Advisory Committee, please contact the Department of Health and Community Services Telephone: 709-729-4984 or email: healthinfo@gov.nl.ca or visit <http://www.health.gov.nl.ca/health>

9.0 Objective

The initial Minister's Advisory Committee was established in September 2002 and completed a review of the operations of *The Child Youth and Family Services Act* within a two year legislated time frame. The second Minister's Advisory Committee was appointed in April 2006 and has responsibility for preparing a final report due in the spring 2009. Thus, 2007-08 was an introductory year for this new Committee.

These objectives support the strategic direction of improved outcomes and accountability as the MAC is an accountability provision under the CYFS Act. The committee reports on the operations of the legislation and report to the Minister on whether, in its opinion, the principles and purpose of the Act are being achieved. This is a review process which reports on whether the legislation is working in operations.

By March 31, 2008, the MAC will have provided information and education on issues relating to the operation of the legislation to the MAC members.

Measure: Education session and information provided to Committee members

PLANNED INDICATORS	RESULTS ACHIEVED
Regular meetings are held to provide presentations and opportunity for discussion of regional information on the operation of the legislation	<p>Met in June 2007 and maintained contact though other mechanisms (telephone & email).</p> <p>Minister of HCS attended meeting with MAC members.</p> <p>MAC continued efforts to recruit new members to fill vacancies.</p>
Information packages are provided to MAC members	<p>MAC received information and updates on departmental initiatives directed at strengthening the CYFS system including the budget, staffing, reviews upcoming and current initiatives.</p> <p>Provided with presentation on Budget 2007/08 initiatives from departmental representatives in CYFS.</p> <p>MAC members provided with a summary report of presentations from the Regional Directors of CYFS.</p> <p>Presentation provided to MAC members on the strategy being developed for Children's Services at the department.</p>
Other relevant information sources identified and provided	<p>Chair of the MAC met with the Minister in April 2007 to discuss progress of the committee.</p> <p>Chair attended a Planning Forum for the development of the strategy for Children's Services in February 2008. The information from this meeting helped inform the strategy.</p> <p>An Advisory Committee was developed out of the forum and the MAC chair is on the Advisory Committee.</p>

10. Appendix A: Strategic Direction

1. Strategic Direction Title: Improved Accountability and Stability

Desired Outcome: Improved accountability and stability in the delivery of health and community services within available resources

Strategic Direction Statement: In achieving a quality and equitable system, provincial policies, standards and guidelines are also needed. These will support citizens having comparable access to service.

Clarifying Statement: The Health and Community Services system consumes 46 per cent of all Government program expenditures and this has an important impact on the fiscal stability of the Province. In achieving a quality and equitable system, best practice models for service management and delivery are essential. The Minister's Advisory Committee's mandate is to review the operations of the *CYFS Act* and to report to the Minister concerning its operation and stating whether, in its opinion, the principles and purposes of the Act are being achieved. The achievement of this mandate is in keeping with the strategic direction of improved accountability and stability and that has been communicated by the Minister.

Focus Areas of the Strategic Direction	This Direction is/was		
	Not being implemented at this time (rationale included in the plan)	Addressed only in specific sub-areas (rationale included in the plan)	Addressed in the activities plan
Identification and monitoring of outcomes for programs and services in priority areas.			*

Note: For a complete version of the Department's strategic directions, contact the Department of Health and Community Services Tel: 709-729-4984 or email: healthinfo@gov.nl.ca or visit <http://www.health.gov.nl.ca/health/> .