



July 25, 2024

VIA E-MAIL

Ref: 290132

Alberta Legal Services
Civil Litigation Team
9th Floor, Peace Hills Trust Tower
10011 – 109 Street
Edmonton, AB, T5J 3S8
E-mail: Abid.Mavani@gov.ab.ca

Re: Alexandru Gabriel Radita – Public Fatality Inquiry

Dear Abid Mavani:

On behalf of British Columbia's Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD), I am providing information on what MCFD has done, or plans to do, relating to the recommendations issued by the Honourable Justice S. L. Van de Veen responding to the above-named matter. MCFD is committed to overall system improvements, and we are incorporating these recommendations into our work.

After analyzing the six recommendations directed to MCFD in British Columbia, we believe that we have completed two, and work is underway for the remaining four.

Regarding recommendation #1, **MCFD accepts this recommendation in principle**, given improvements have already been made. MCFD adopted the Structured Decision-Making Screening Assessment Tool in 2012, and MCFD's Provincial Centralized Screening was fully implemented in 2016, both of which strengthen screening practices. Provincial Centralized Screening is a 24/7 operation focused on screening child protection reports for British Columbia. Callers with an urgent child protection report have an option to choose the "urgent queue" with a response time of up to 5 minutes. Ongoing training and skill development for staff who are screening child protection reports is provided to collect accurate information to support screening decisions.

Regarding recommendation #2, **MCFD accepts this recommendation**. MCFD trains new staff on screening requirements as part of required training. MCFD also regularly audits screening practices, assessing for compliance to standards and appropriateness of response.

Regarding recommendation #3, **MCFD has a different response to the recommendation**. MCFD does not track closed files but plans to support an amendment to the *Provincial/Territorial Protocol on Children, Youth and Families Moving between Provinces and Territories* to include information sharing between provinces in situations where a report is made to the originating province about a family who does not have an open file with them and now resides in the receiving province.

Regarding recommendation #4, **MCFD accepts this recommendation in principle**. A policy update was made in 2023 to the Child Protection Response Policies - Chapter 3 to clarify that when a new report is received at the initial screening stage, if it is determined that the child/youth is residing in another province, the director must verbally contact the other province to inform them of the report when the information provided suggests that a child or youth is or may be in need of protection. Language in the Child Protection Response Policies - Chapter 3 was also amended to align with the *Provincial/Territorial Protocol on Children, Youth and Families Moving between Provinces and Territories* about issuing interprovincial child welfare alerts when a family cannot be located. Previous language directed staff to issue an interprovincial child welfare alert only “if the child/youth is considered to be in immediate danger.” New language directs staff to issue an interprovincial child welfare alert in situations when a child “may be in need of protection.” Changing this language broadened the scope of situations where an interprovincial child welfare alert can be issued.

Regarding recommendation #5, **MCFD has a different response to the recommendation**. There are challenges to a general alert system for information sharing from a legal and technological standpoint. MCFD’s preferred approach is to focus on information sharing between the child welfare authorities in Canadian jurisdictions, which in turn can liaise as needed with other service providers within their own jurisdiction.

Regarding recommendation #6, **MCFD accepts this recommendation in principle**. MCFD and the Ministry of Education and Child Care developed the *Joint Educational Planning and Support for Children and Youth in Care: Cross Ministry Guidelines* in 2021. MCFD revised the *British Columbia Handbook for Action on Child Abuse and Neglect*, which was updated and publicly posted in 2017. This handbook is for service providers and includes information on the duty to report to the director. MCFD also has a Protocol Agreement with Physicians (1997) regarding their duty to report, as well as local protocol agreements with police (RCMP and municipal). MCFD does not have a protocol with pharmaceutical services but can access Pharmacare information through the Medical Benefits program if there is a need to address a child protection concern.

If you have any questions, please contact my office.

Sincerely,

Original Signed

Deborah Francis
A/Executive Director
Child Welfare Branch