



Children's Services
Deputy Minister's Office
12th floor Sterling Place
9940-106 Street NW
Edmonton, Alberta T5K 2N2

May 4, 2020

AR 7502

Ms. Jennifer Fuchinsky
Fatality Inquiry Coordinator
Justice and Solicitor General
Legal Services Division
9th Floor, Peace Hills Trust Tower
10011 - 109 Street
Edmonton AB T5J 3S8

Dear Ms. Fuchinsky:

Thank you for providing a copy of Honourable Judge H.M. Van Harten's report from the public fatality inquiry into the death of S.S.R., a youth in care at the time of her passing. The death of a child or youth is devastating, and our thoughts are with S's family and community as they continue to mourn her loss.

Fatality inquiries provide a valuable opportunity for an external review of tragic incidents involving Albertans. Children's Services continues to evolve to serve the needs of vulnerable Albertans, and values the input from our ministry partners and stakeholders. They offer insight into how the child intervention system can be improved to support better outcomes for children, youth, and families.

Please see the attached table for Children's Services' response to the recommendations and the rationale for this response.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond. If you require anything further, please contact my office.

Sincerely,

Original signed

Darlene Bouwsema
Deputy Minister

Attachment

Ministry of Children's Services' Response to the Public Fatality Inquiry – S. S. R.

On December 17, 2019, a Fatality Inquiry Report was released concerning the September 2, 2016 death of 17-year-old Shayla Mary Summer Sunwalk Rollinmud. The purpose of the inquiry, conducted by the Honourable Provincial Court Judge H.M. Van Harten, was to review the circumstances under which the death occurred and to share any recommendations for the prevention of similar deaths. The *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act* (CYFEA) requires a public response from Children's Services (CS) regarding recommendations made to the ministry through fatality inquiries.

The death of a child is devastating for family, friends, community, and others involved with the child and family. Our thoughts are with those who continue to grieve for Shayla.

The inquiry report makes one recommendation directed to Children's Services (CS).

CS' response includes information gathered from the following sources:

- a review of existing policies, and
- a review of current ministry initiatives, practice, and program directions related to issues identified in the report.

We welcome the recommendations laid out in the Fatality Inquiry Report and thank the Honourable Provincial Court Judge H.M. Van Harten for working on behalf of vulnerable children, youth, and families in Alberta.



Recommendation	Ministry Response	Actions Planned or Underway
<p>1) Whenever a child’s casework file is transferred from one caseworker to another, the transfer meeting should be noted or, preferably, be recorded. The new caseworker will then be aware of the file history and able to provide appropriate services to a client.</p>	<p>CS accepts the recommendation in full and believes the recommendation to be satisfied through existing policy.</p>	<p>CS policy directly addresses case transfers in section 3.2 of the Enhancement Policy Manual. File transfers within and outside of the region are to be well planned, timely, coordinated and focus on the child’s best interest. Documentation of all actions and decisions related to the file transfer is required. Therefore, whenever a child’s file is transferred from one caseworker to another, the transfer meeting is to be recorded.</p> <p>As this policy satisfies the recommendation, no further action will be taken.</p>