



The General Child  
and Family Services  
Authority

# ANNUAL REPORT

FOURTH ANNUAL  
GENERAL MEETING

April 1, 2006 to March 31, 2007

SEPTEMBER 26, 2007

Norwood Hotel  
112 Marion Street  
Winnipeg, MB

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## I. Message from the Chair



I am pleased to report on the many exciting activities, new initiatives and major accomplishments by the General Child and Family Services Authority in 2006-07.

In previous annual reports, I have written about our Board of Directors' plans to implement a governance model in a three-phase process. These plans coincided with the passing of *The Child and Family Services Authorities Act* in 2003 and the strategy for implementing the system restructuring under the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry-Child Welfare Initiative (AJI-CWI). It was during the transition

phase where most of the restructuring activity occurred with work and resources being transferred to the three new Aboriginal Child and Family Services Authorities. In 2006/07, our Board continued to monitor the final stages of the transition of programs and services to the new system. The most significant development occurred on February 3, 2006 when the All Nations Coordinated Response Network (ANCR), the new intake agency in Winnipeg, became operational. I was pleased to be invited and bring greetings from the General Child and Family Services Authority at the Grand Opening and Celebration of the ANCR agency.

This year has proven to be a very demanding and exciting time for the child and family services system. As the system restructuring moved toward completion, we have been challenged to embark on many new and significant improvements to the delivery of child and family services. The blueprint for these improvements is included in the "Changes for Children – Strengthening our Commitment" document, released by the Province of Manitoba in October 2006. This was in response to the three external reviews that had been completed on the child and family services system in Manitoba. The response of the Province of Manitoba, through the Minister of Family Services and Housing, to the over 200 recommendations in those reviews was impressive: it provided an initial funding commitment of \$42 million over the next two and one-half years.

In collaboration with our partners, the General Child and Family Services Authority has been an active participant on the Implementation Team established to plan for the "Changes for Children" agenda. This represents an important opportunity for the governance partners in the new system to jointly plan for system enhancements that will result in safer and healthier children, families and communities. One of the earliest accomplishments was the additional funding provided to child and family services agencies for workload relief and the designated intake function in the latter stages of 2006-07. This is just one of the many positive initiatives being planned by the Implementation Team. Our Board must continue to set the strategic direction for the General Authority's role and priorities in this process. I look forward to reporting on the progress of this work in the 2007/08 Annual Report.

Throughout 2006/07, the Board advanced progress toward establishing our governance structure for the post-transition period. This continues to present us with some particular challenges given the mixed model of service delivery that includes private agencies and government offices. As a Board of Directors, we have had a number of productive and collaborative discussions about this with senior officials in the Department of Family Services and Housing. We welcome this dialogue and are confident that the development of our governance model can proceed successfully over the next year.

The Authority has also been taking new initiatives in the service of Manitoba's children and will continue to do so as needed. For example, the Board recently agreed to expand the Authority's role and responsibilities by acquiring additional office space to make room for the foster care recruitment and hotel strategy staff. The intent is to assist the Strategy staff in finding alternative placements for children and reducing the use of hotels. We regard this expansion as part and parcel of continuing evolution of the Authority.

I am pleased to advise that many of our Board members agreed to renew their appointments this year. It is also my pleasure to announce the new appointments of Ms. Kathy Levine and Ms. Beth Beaupre, who filled long-standing Board vacancies and attended their first meeting on November 29, 2006. At this time, I would also like to recognize two Board members who left during 2006-07; Ms. Dale Brownlee, our Treasurer, and Ms. Bea Jolly, both committed Board members from the inception of the Authority. Both members made significant contributions to the development of the Board.

In closing, I would like to thank all the members of the Board for their continued hard work and commitment to the General Child and Family Services Authority. On behalf of the Board, I would also like to extend sincere appreciation to the management and staff of the General Authority who continue to tackle each new challenge with enthusiasm and professionalism.

On behalf of the Board, I would like to extend our gratitude to our former Chief Executive Officer, Mr. Dennis Schellenberg. Dennis recently left the General Authority to pursue an opportunity with the Department of Family Services and Housing. His leadership was essential to advancing the implementation of the AJI-CWI and his guidance critical to the development of our Board and organization. We wish him well in all of his future endeavours.

As a Board of Directors, we are very proud of the 2006/07 achievements of the General Child and Family Services Authority and are excited about the great opportunities that lie ahead for strengthening our supports for Manitoba's children, families and communities.

Respectfully submitted,

Jean Ayre

Chair, Board of Directors

## II. Treasurer's Report

I am pleased to be provided with the opportunity to report on the financial activities of the General Authority. My first year as Treasurer for the General Authority has been a unique and exciting experience that has presented me with insights into the General Authority's operations.

It is a pleasure to advise that the General Authority continues to be a financially stable organization prepared to meet current requirements and future challenges. Our auditor has provided the General Authority with the opinion that these financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the General Authority as at March 31, 2007 and the results of its operations and cash flow for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian generally accepted accounting principles. This is reflected in our healthy cash position in the bank, our cumulative surplus and current-year operating surplus, as noted in the audited financial statements included in the Annual Report.

The General Authority has established three funds to manage its financial operations, which include the Operating Fund, the Transition Fund and the Agency Fund. The Operating Fund is used to support the staffing and operating requirements of the Authority. This fund also supports new initiatives and one-time expenditures, such as the Foster Care Recruitment and Hotel Reduction Strategy, which was successfully introduced in the latter stages of 2006/07. The Transition Fund was established to provide for authority development and agency support related to the restructuring of the child and family services system. The General Authority has used this funding to support the expansion of its office and agency staffing requirements respecting the restructuring of the child and family services system. The Agency Fund provides funding to child and family services agencies under the jurisdiction of the General Authority to support the delivery of services. Funding is used for agency staffing and operating requirements and the delivery of family support services.

I look forward to my continuing role as Treasurer with the Authority and working with the Board members in the upcoming year. Thanks to General Authority staff for their support!

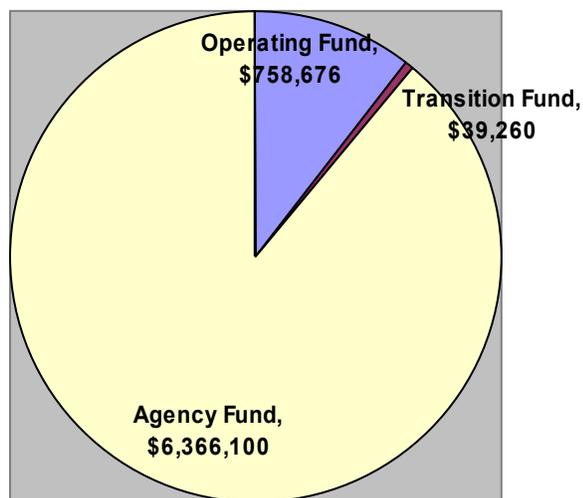
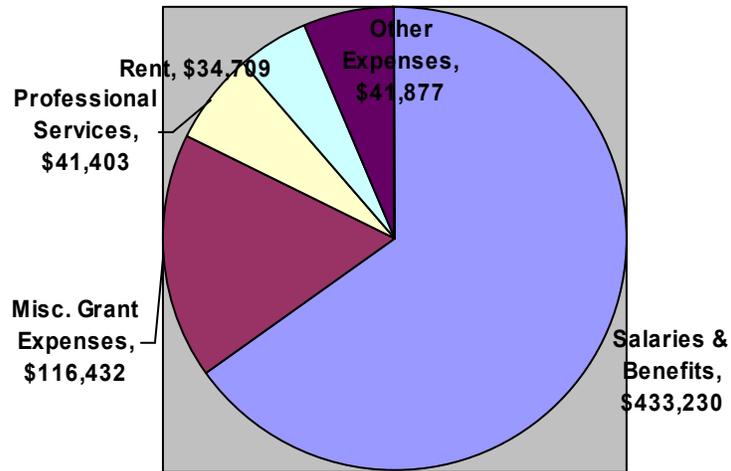
Respectfully submitted,

Doreen Draffin, Treasurer

# Financial Highlights

For the year ended March 31, 2007

Statement of Revenues and Expenses – Summary of Expenses for the Operating Fund



### III. Overview of the General Child and Family Services Authority

*The Child and Family Services Authorities Act* (the *Act*) was proclaimed by the Province of Manitoba on November 24, 2003. The *Act* formally established a concurrent jurisdiction model where three Aboriginal Authorities and one General Authority assumed responsibility for providing services to their community members throughout the Province. As the General Authority embraced its new responsibilities, the Board of Directors took a number of significant steps toward developing its corporate identity. These steps included the drafting of by-laws, the appointment of Executive members, the formation of Standing Committees, the development of administrative and financial policies, and engagement in a strategic planning exercise. At the conclusion of the strategic planning session, the Board of Directors approved the following vision, mission and principle statements to guide the work of the General Child and Family Services Authority.

#### **VISION:**

Healthy, Safe Children  
Responsible, Nurturing Families  
Caring Communities

#### **MISSION:**

The General Child and Family Services Authority is a non-profit organization responsible for the administration and provision of child and family services by the agencies under its jurisdiction.

The Authority is governed by a Board of Directors responsible for the management of fiscal resources, the development of policies and the establishment and monitoring of standards.

We are committed to the protection and care of children by building on the strengths of individuals, families and communities.

## **STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES:**

In conducting our business, the General Authority will apply and promote the following principles:

### **1) CHILD / FAMILY – CENTERED PRACTICE**

- The best interest of the child is paramount.
- A child functions best within a supportive family and community. To the greatest extent possible, families will be supported to provide a healthy, safe environment.
- Policies and practices are strength-based, asset-focused and promote family and community-based systems of care and mutual support.

### **2) EFFECTIVE AND RESPONSIBLE SERVICES**

- Quality services are designed to meet the needs of those we support.
- Services are evidence based, comprehensive, responsive and recognize and respect diversity.
- The delivery of quality service is best achieved through promotion and support of a well qualified workforce.
- Public accountability and fiscal responsibility are fundamental to the work of the Authority.

### **3) PARTNERSHIPS**

- We value and promote partnerships with all stakeholders in the area of services to children and families.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

On November 24, 2006, the Board of Directors' first three year-term had expired and some members of the board chose to remain for another term. Following are the members who served on the Board during 2006/07.

Jean Ayre, Chairperson	Ellen Fleishman
Jan Sanderson, Vice Chairperson	Beth Beaupre - New Member
Guy Jourdain, Secretary	Kathy Levine - New Member
Doreen Draffin, Treasurer	Bea Jolly - Term Expired
Helen Wang	Dale Brownlee - Resigned

## GENERAL AUTHORITY STAFF

The General Authority saw some changes to staff with the addition of the Hotel Reduction/Foster Care Recruitment Strategy Teams. The following are the General Authority Staff during the 2006/07 year:

Dennis H. Schellenberg, Chief Executive Officer  
Dale Robinson, Chief Financial Officer  
Anne Pratt, Administrative Assistant  
Pat Wawyn, Program Specialist - Community Inquiry  
Jeanette Grennier, Program Specialist – Alternative Care  
Diva Faria, Program Specialist - Protection and Family Services  
Amanda Glassock, Admin Support to the Hotel Reduction Teams  
Collette Macpherson, Hotel Reduction Strategy Resource Development  
Laura Morton, Foster Care Recruitment & Retention Specialist

**THE GENERAL CHILD AND  
FAMILY SERVICES  
AUTHORITY**

**2006/2007  
A YEAR IN REVIEW**

### III. THE GENERAL CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES AUTHORITY

#### 2006/07 – A YEAR IN REVIEW

The following sections of the report provide a summary and overview of the highlights and key activities undertaken by the General Child and Family Services Authority during 2006/07.

Under the *Child and Family Services Authorities Act*, there was a significant shift of powers from the Director of Child Welfare to each of the four new authorities. With the new *Act* in place, most powers directly related to the operation of child and family service agencies were transferred from the Director of Child Welfare to the four authorities. The authorities now have the exclusive legislative authority to mandate, fund and oversee the services provided by child and family services agencies throughout the province. The following sections are organized into five topic areas that coincide with the main areas of responsibility that were transferred to each authority with the passing of the new legislation in 2003. These include:

- A section on activities involving the General Child and Family Services Authority working in a formal partnership arrangement with our colleague authorities and the Child Protection Branch. These partnership structures, one of which is enshrined within the new legislation, are essential to ensure collaboration and cooperation in implementing new initiatives and addressing system-wide issues.
- A section describing the activities of Authority-specific committees that are in place to promote the participation of our agencies in policy development, collaborative issue resolution, strategic planning and the design of new initiatives.
- A section that summarizes the Authority's experience in 2006/07 in responding to issues and inquiries about the delivery of child and family services.
- A section that describes the efforts of the Authority to monitor the operations and services provided by each agency. This quality assurance role is now a core element of the Authority's legislated responsibility. This provides a brief overview of case and program reviews undertaken in 2006/07, a summary of ongoing quality assurance work and sample statistics.
- The final section provides an overview of the Authority's work on an inter-jurisdictional or cross-sectoral basis. These partnerships are important to ensure that cross-system issues are addressed collaboratively and in the interests of our children and families.

# INTER-AUTHORITY AND AJI-CWI PARTNERSHIP ACTIVITIES

## Partnership Structures

In 2003, the *Child and Family Services Authorities Act* enshrined a new entity called Standing Committee as a permanent and necessary feature of a concurrent jurisdiction system. The Chief Executive Officer represents the General Authority on Standing Committee. Other members include the Chief Executive Officer from each of the three Aboriginal Authorities and the Director of Child Welfare. This membership mirrors the partnership arrangement that had been put in place to plan and implement the AJI-CWI.

Standing Committee's ongoing role is to ensure that the foundational requirements for the new child and family service system are put in place across the delivery systems in each of the four authorities. Also, it is this committee that is responsible for planning the remaining AJI-CWI priorities (new legislation, reviewing the residential care system, and building a new funding model). Throughout the early part of 2006/07, given that the AJI-CWI restructuring was just nearing completion, Standing Committee's work focused on stabilizing the new system.

In addition to Standing Committee, the Chief Executive Officer also represents the General Authority on a body called the Joint Management Group or JMG. During 2006/07, JMG spent countless hours planning, designing and overseeing the creation a new intake agency in Winnipeg to operate on behalf of all four authorities. This required the transfer of significant resources from an existing General Authority agency (Winnipeg Child and Family Services) to the new agency which was to be governed by a separate board of directors.

In the fall of 2006, a third partnership structure was created as a result of the three external reviews that had been completed on Manitoba's child and family services system. In response to the over 200 recommendations in these external reviews, in October 2006 the Department of Family Services and Housing announced a series of new initiatives collectively referred to as *Changes For Children*. Together with the already planned AJI-CWI priorities, the *Changes For Children* initiatives offered a blueprint for addressing many long-standing and pervasive issues that have challenged the child welfare system in Manitoba and other jurisdictions for many years.

As part of the *Changes For Children* agenda, the Department of Family Services and Housing announced that a new team would be created to implement the new initiatives. The Implementation Team is chaired by two persons external to the authorities and the Department of Family Services and Housing. In addition to the co-chairs, membership includes Standing Committee and the Managing Director of the Strategic Initiatives and Program Support Branch. As a member of Standing Committee, the Chief Executive Officer of the General Authority was a key participant in planning and implementing the *Changes For Children* initiatives throughout much of 2006/07.

To compound an already challenging workload on the partnership structures, two other reviews were released during 2006/07 and referred to Standing Committee and Implementation Team for attention. One report entitled “*Strengthening Our Youth – Their Journey to Competence and Independence*” was released in November 2006 by the Office of the Children’s Advocate and focused on services and supports for youth leaving care when reaching the age of majority. The second report was released by the Office of the Auditor General in December 2006. This report examined the policies and procedures in the Child and Family Services Division prior to the AJI-CWI restructuring. Many of these recommendations require a response from the authorities now that the new governance model is in place.

## **2006/2007 Highlights– Partnership Structures**

Following is a summary of the key activities and accomplishments achieved in 2006/07 through the work of the various partnership structures (i.e. - Standing Committee, Joint Management Group and Implementation Team). This section highlights the implications for the General Authority and its agencies.

- To set a value framework, a vision statement and set of twelve principles were developed to guide implementation of the *Changes For Children* initiatives. The General Child and Family Services Authority has also embraced these principles as key indicators of known best practice approaches in child welfare. These will be used to guide Authority-specific strategic planning throughout 2007/08.
- The General Child and Family Services Authority was signatory to a joint resolution confirming a *Changes For Children* allocation in support of workload relief for front-line staff in the child and family services system. On an annual basis this will result in over \$2.0 Million of new funding being allocated to General Authority agencies to hire new staff. This should add approximately 24 new positions to the agencies.
- Through the work of JMG and later the Implementation Team, the new designated intake agency in Winnipeg became operational in February 2007. The All Nations Coordinated Response Network (ANCR) is now delivering service as a new agency under a mandate granted by the Southern First Nations Child and Family Services Authority. The General Child and Family Services Authority will remain involved as an active participant on JMG which will continue to serve a key advisory and consultant role with the new ANCR board of directors.
- In response to specific recommendations in the external reviews, the General Child and Family Services Authority provided funding to its agencies to purchase new equipment to strengthen their ability to communicate with children, youth, families, staff and the general public. This was considered a necessary first step to implement the recommendations for enhanced communication activity recommended in the external reviews.
- The General Child and Family Services Authority initiated plans to develop its own website to enhance the organization’s capacity to communicate with agencies and key stakeholders. The website should be in place during 2007/08.

- In March 2006, the General Child and Family Services Authority sponsored a symposium attended by representative from each of its agencies. The purpose of this one day event was to review progress on the *Changes For Children* initiatives and provide basic educational information on “differential response” service models. This is the term used in many jurisdictions and cited in the external reviews to describe a new approach that offers at risk families a supportive enhancement service stream rather than an intrusive child protection response. As recommended in the external reviews, this model is being planned carefully and implemented in a three-phase strategy. This symposium was the beginning of the first phase which calls for extensive promotional and educational activities to familiarize agencies and collateral service providers with the new model.
- Through the work of Implementation Team, the four authorities reached agreement on improvements to the Child and Family Services Information System (CFSIS) that should be done on a priority basis in 2006/07 and 2007/08. When in place, these should result in changes that will make CFSIS much more user friendly, efficient, improve the availability of critical information and strengthen case planning by increasing accessibility across the system.
- The four child and family services authorities also agreed to pursue a complete re-engineering of CFSIS and in 2006/07, jointly developed terms of reference for this project to begin in 2007/08.
- As recommended in the external reviews, each authority compiled materials on suicide prevention and water safety for distribution in early 2007/08.
- As part of Standing Committee, the General Authority participated in the development of a draft protocol for responding to reports on child deaths prepared under section 10 of the *Fatality Inquiries Act*. The protocol describes a collaborative approach for responding to these reports including timelines, reporting requirements and follow-up procedures to ensure recommendations are acted upon.
- Near the end of the 2006/07 fiscal year, the General Child and Family Services Authority was in the final stages of hiring a Training Coordinator. When this position is filled, the Training Coordinator will represent the General Authority on the Joint Training Unit, an initiative of the four authorities to ensure a collaborative and cooperative approach to staff development across the system. This Unit will also be responsible for developing plans to implement the training recommendations in the external reviews.
- In November 2006, Standing Committee announced its plans to reduce and eventually eliminate the use of hotels for children requiring emergency placement. Each authority hired a team of staff to work specifically on inter-authority teams to implement this hotel reduction strategy. The General Authority staff were in place by February, 2007. This has proven to be very successful as the average number of children placed in hotels from General Authority agencies has dropped significantly since the staff teams were put in place. By the end of March 2007, General Authority agencies averaged 15 children in hotel placements per day. This compares with an average of 58 children per day in hotels over the six months prior to the hotel reduction strategy becoming operational. This represents a 74% drop in hotel usage by General Authority agencies. The overall goal is to, no later than August 1, 2007, create sufficient new resources so that hotels will no longer be needed as emergency placements for children coming into care.

- As a concurrent and complementary initiative, the General Authority was also part of an inter-authority process to increase the recruitment of new foster homes in the system. The General Authority hired one staff person in February, 2007 who was dedicated to this task. The goal was to create 300 new licensed foster home spaces across all four authorities. This has also been quite successful as, by the end of March 2007, the General Authority had already licensed 85 new licensed foster home spaces for children requiring longer term placement.

In response to the report from the Office of the Auditor General (OAG), the General Authority initiated the following actions from December 2006 (when the report was released) to the end of March 2007.

- The General Authority has requested its agencies to ensure that all foster home licenses and renewals are current and that employees have completed their criminal records and child abuse registry checks. The agencies and government offices have been requested to report on these items regularly.
- The General Authority completed Service Purchase Agreements with its agencies and government offices.
- The four authorities collaborated to prepare a joint response to the audit findings. This response was included in the final OAG report.
- The General Authority has reviewed all of the pertinent recommendations in the OAG report and has established a template for tracking responses. This work will continue throughout 2007/08 as the General Authority and its agencies develop further responses to the report.

## **DIRECTORS' COMMON TABLE HIGHLIGHTS**

### **2006/2007 Activities**

Since its inception, the General Child and Family Services Authority has recognized the importance of having a structure in place for mandated agencies to shape Authority-specific policy, collaborate to achieve greater consistency in service delivery and to collectively influence key decisions that have cross-authority implications. In March 2005, the General Authority created the Directors' Common Table (DCT) for this purpose.

Membership on the DCT includes the Chief Executive Officer and Chief Financial Officer from the General Authority, the executive directors from each of the three private agencies (Child and Family Services of Central Manitoba, Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba and Jewish Child and Family Services), the Chief Executive Officer from Winnipeg Child and Family Services Branch, the Executive Director from Rural and Northern Services Branch and one manager from each of the four rural regions and Churchill Health Centre. All General Authority agencies and service delivery areas are represented on this committee.

The DCT has also created two sub-committees to concentrate on specific areas of common work. These are the Services and Supports to Children in Care Sub-Committee and the Protection and Family Services Sub-Committee. The terms of reference, tasks and priorities for these sub-committees are set by the DCT. The two sub-committees provide progress reports to the DCT on a quarterly basis.

Throughout 2006/07, the DCT met on eight occasions to discuss common issues, engage in joint planning, be updated on new initiatives from Standing Committee and resolve issues across agencies or service delivery areas. The external reviews and implementation of the Changes for Children Initiatives were key items on many of the DCT agendas throughout this fiscal year. The DCT also discussed issues related to service purchase agreements, the new intake agency in Winnipeg, the Auditor General's Report, service protocols, standards, foster care recruitment and the hotel reduction strategy.

The DCT met regularly with and monitored the work of the two sub-committees. Following is an overview of the two sub-committees and a summary of the accomplishments from their work in 2006/07.

### **Services and Support to Children in Care Sub Committee:**

- This committee focused on two major tasks this fiscal year. A review of adoption services throughout the General Authority agencies was completed, which included an environmental scan and a report to the Common Table. The final report identified trends and issues in the field and made recommendations for future service delivery.
- The second task was a review of current Child in Care policies of General Authority agencies with a goal of drafting uniform, consistent policies for use by all General Authority agencies. The committee has had an opportunity to collect and review the policies and is in the process of completing the revised drafts to enhance consistent service delivery.
- The committee continues to work on Child in Care policies for use by all of the GA agencies.

### **Child Protection and Family Services Sub-Committee:**

- On December 14, 2006, based on an in-depth environmental scan conducted by the committee of GA Child Abuse Committees, *The General Authority (GA) Joint Child Abuse Committee Best Practices Statement* was finalized and approved at the Directors' Common Table (DCT) and distributed to the GA agencies.
- On December 14, 2006, the committee presented the results of an environmental scan conducted with the GA agencies with respect to Section 10 of *The CFS Act* and the use of Family Support Services Agreements and Voluntary Placement Agreements. The committee provided a written report with recommendations and a review of Self Managed Care.
- An environmental scan was completed with the GA agencies by the committee related to Youth Crisis Stabilization Services. A final report with recommendations was presented to the DCT.
- The committee was tasked with providing education related to the Joint Statement of Physical Punishment of Children and Youth to its agencies following the documents endorsement by the GA. Copies of the document were distributed to the GA agencies. The committee also distributed the "Spanking Should I or Shouldn't I" pamphlet to its agencies. The pamphlet was also translated into French in collaboration with The Government of Manitoba French Language Services and the University of Manitoba.
- On March 08, 2007, the committee completed a Family Support Services Funding Environmental Scan, including a written synthesis and analysis for review by the DCT.
- The committee continues to work in collaboration with the GA representative on the Alternative Care Sub Committee on the development of a protocol related to Child Abuse Investigations in Foster Homes.
- The committee will be reviewing the Child Discipline Guidelines Research Document developed by the Provincial Advisory Committee on Child Abuse and providing feedback to the DCT.

### **Joint Committee Activities:**

On March 08, 2007 the two sub committees completed and presented at the DCT a *Review of the Provincial Standards for Child and Family Services Standards Development*, which included a number of recommendations.

# ISSUES AND INQUIRIES

## 2006/2007 Highlights

With the proclamation of *The Child and Family Services Authorities Act* in November 2003, a number of duties were transferred from the Child Protection Branch (CPB) to the four authorities. This section focuses on the duties and responsibilities of the General Authority associated with case related and service delivery matters of its mandated agencies.

The General Authority is mandated for ensuring its agencies provide services and follow the practices and procedures in accordance with legislation and provincial standards. Concerns and inquiries from the community and organizations regarding service provision, agencies, and staff are received by the Authority.

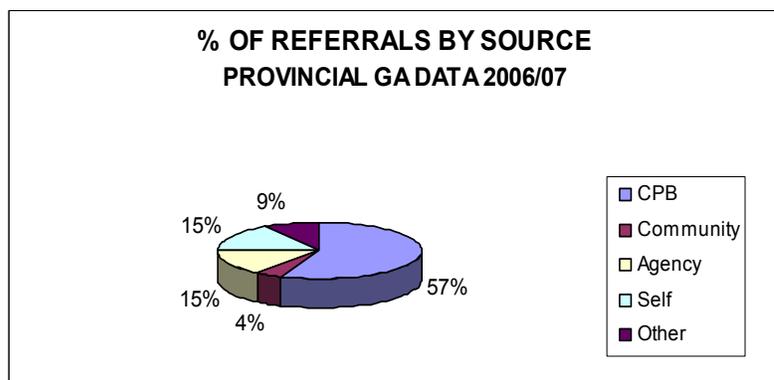
The General Authority is also mandated to advise the Minister about child and family services matters with respect to concerns from the community and agency service recipients, as well as issues reported in the media. The General Authority investigates these matters and advises the CPB who coordinates this function on behalf of the Minister.

While inquiries received at the General Authority are largely from the CPB, referrals are also received from the community, agency service recipients, and external sources such as the Office of the Children's Advocate and Office of the Provincial Ombudsman.

This past year there were 354 referrals, a decrease of 4.8% from the previous year's total of 371.

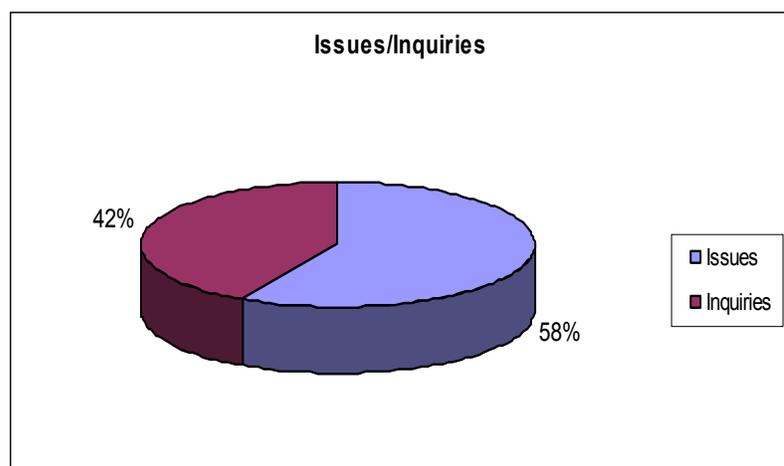
### Source of Referral

Consistent with previous years, the largest percentage of referrals (57%) were received from the Child Protection Branch



### Inquiries/Issues

Referrals are defined as either an inquiry or an issue. An issue is where an individual raises concerns with the provision of services as stipulated under *The Child and Family Services Act*. An inquiry is viewed as a response to a specific request for information from the Department, media or community. The Authority recorded 205 issues versus 149 inquiries.



# QUALITY ASSURANCE

Under the new legislation passed in 2003, the authorities assumed responsibility for monitoring the quality of services delivered by mandated agencies. Each year, the General Child and Family Services Authority regularly undertakes quality assurance activities to ensure agencies are in compliance with service expectations. These regular activities are supplemented by detailed case and program reviews that are done periodically throughout the year. Following is an overview of these main quality assurance activities.

## **Case Reviews:**

In 2006/07, the General Authority conducted a detailed review on 33 individual cases. The purpose of each review is to monitor the quality of services in comparison with legislation, provincial standards, policies and known best practice approaches. The conclusions of each review are shared with the agency and used as an opportunity to learn and strengthen service delivery. Often, the review conclusions support the agency's case decision. Occasionally, the General Authority will make recommendations to ensure the highest quality of service is provided to our children and families.

"Quality is defined by the customer or service recipient and refers to the degree of excellence of the service. Assurance refers to the promise or guarantee of quality services provision"

Goodman,D Leblanc, T & Lumsden,A. OACAS Journal

This fiscal year, the General Authority was also able to refer a number of grandparents to the Department's Family Conciliation Branch for assistance in resolving access and guardianship disputes without the financial and emotional burden of a contested court hearing. This change was reflected in legislation in November 2006, when *The Child and Family Services Act* was amended to offer a grandparent, step-parent or other extended family the right to apply for access to the child.

## **Program Reviews:**

In June 2006, the Chief Executive Officer of the Churchill Regional Health Authority Inc. (CRHA) requested that the General Authority conduct a review of its Child and Family Services program (CFS program), staffing qualifications, the relationship between CRHA staff and community collaterals, and the operations of the Receiving Home.

The review was conducted by the General Authority as part of its statutory role to ensure quality of service. Under Section 19 of *The Child and Family Services Authorities Act* (CFSAA), the Director of an Authority has the right to ensure that the agencies it has mandated provide services and follow the practices and procedures in accordance with provincial standards.

The review was conducted from September 2006 to January 2007. It included an on-site visit in Churchill on September 27, 28 and 29, 2006; a review of documents; a random audit of six Protection and nine Child in Care files; and interviews with CRHA staff, a CRHA board member and collaterals related to the CFS program. A review of the Churchill Receiving Home was excluded, as the Child Protection Branch (CPB) completed a licensing review of the Receiving Home in July 2006. The General Authority was provided with a copy of this review.

The report was completed in January 2007, with a number of observations and recommendations. The CRHA provided a response with an action plan to the General Authority at the end of May, 2007. The General Authority continues to work in collaboration with the CRHA to implement the review findings.

## Child in Care Annual Reviews

Under *The Child and Family Services Authorities Act*, the General Authority is responsible for ensuring the completion and review of Child In Care Annual Reviews, which are to be completed on all children who have been in the care of an agency for over twelve months. Agencies have 97% compliance in the completion of their reviews on Permanent Wards.

### Extensions of Care and Maintenance

Under legislation, the General Authority is responsible for the review and approval of Extensions of Care and Maintenance for permanent wards who require care beyond the age of majority. This fiscal year, 32 requests were approved, a slight decrease from last year's total of 38. The following chart illustrates the number of approvals granted by agency and reason for the request:

AGENCY	REASON FOR REQUEST			TOTAL
	Completion of High School	Waiting for Supported Living Services to Begin	Independent Living Skills Development	
Winnipeg	8	4	3	15
Interlake	1	0	0	1
Eastman	3	2	1	6
Central	1	1	0	2
Western	4	2	0	6
Northern	1	1	0	2
Parkland	0	0	0	0
Jewish	0	0	0	0
Churchill	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>32</b>

Canadian youth aging out of care cite the following requirements as being crucial in ensuring better transitions to adulthood:

- Need for ongoing supportive relationships
- Peer support, independent living training
- Increased access to financial support and
- Support in gaining access to education, employment and training programs"

Tweddle, Anne, Youth Leaving Care- How do They Fare

### Mixed Facility Licenses

The General Authority reviews and approves requests for mixed facilities, where foster families provide care for both children in care and adults. The following illustrates approvals granted this year, which have increased slightly in comparison to last year.

AGENCY	TOTALS
Winnipeg	16
Interlake	3
Eastman	1
Central	0
Western	4
Northern	1
Parkland	0
Jewish	0
Churchill	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>25</b>

## Foster Home License Variances

Under the Foster Home Licensing Regulation, provisions are made whereby certain regulations may be varied with the approval of the Authority. This includes:

### **Regulation 7(5)**

Of the children cared for, “no more than two can be infants and no more than three can be under the age of five years”.

### **Regulation 7(4)**

“Licensee shall not provide care and supervision in the foster home for more than a total of seven persons.”

### **Regulation 7(1)**

“A foster home may be licensed by a licensing agency to provide care and supervision for not more than four children.”

### **Regulation 7(3)**

“A licensing agency may license a foster home to provide residential care and supervision for more than four foster children where all the foster children in the foster home are siblings.”

### **Regulation 25(c)**

“A foster child over two years of age does not share a bedroom with an adult.”

The General Authority approved four variances this year in comparison to seven last fiscal year. The following chart outlines these requests by agency and the type of variance requested.

<b>Agency</b>	<b>Regulation 7(5)</b>	<b>Regulation 7(4)</b>	<b>Regulation 7(1)</b>	<b>Regulation 7(3)</b>	<b>Regulation 25(c)</b>	<b>Total</b>
Winnipeg	0	1	0	0	0	1
Interlake	0	0	0	0	0	0
Central	0	0	0	0	0	0
Eastman	1	1	0	1	0	3
Western	0	0	0	0	0	0
Northern	0	0	0	0	0	0
Parkland	0	0	0	0	0	0
Jewish	0	0	0	0	0	0
Churchill	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>

## Services to Minor Parents

The General Authority receives copies of all Notices of Live Birth to a Mother under age 18.

The Program Specialist checks the Child and Family Services Information System to ensure that services have been offered to the minor parent. If services have not been offered, the Program Specialist follows up with the agency.

In cases where the minor parent is under 14 years of age, the Program Specialist has contact with the agency to ensure that the appropriate procedures have been followed to determine if an abuse investigation should be conducted.

Notices of Live Birth to a Minor Parent 2006/2007			
Agency	Number of Notices of Live Birth to a Mother Age 14 to 18	Number of Notices of Live Birth to a Mother Under Age 14	Total
Winnipeg	84	0	84
Western	12	0	12
Central	10	0	10
Parkland	1	0	1
Northern	1	0	1
Interlake	2	0	2
Eastman	15	0	15
JCFS	0	0	0
Churchill	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>125</b>

## Services to Families

### Voluntary Placement Agreements

Under Section 14(1) of the *Child and Family Services Act*, "an agency may enter into an agreement with a parent, guardian or other person who has actual care and control of a child, for placing the child without transfer of guardianship in any place which provides child care where that person is unable to make adequate provision for the care of that child".

The Program Specialist reviews and approves all Voluntary Placement Agreements entered into by General Authority Agencies.

The Program Specialist provides all mandated agencies with a Voluntary Placement Agreement Quality Assurance Report on a regular basis.

Voluntary Placement Agreements 2006/2007			
Agency	Number of Agreements		
	New	Renewals	Terminations
Winnipeg	253	312	106
Western	30	10	10
Central	37	18	17
Parkland	3	1	0
Northern	15	4	5
Interlake	14	11	9
Eastman	50	47	8
JCFS	2	0	1
Churchill	2	1	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>406</b>	<b>404</b>	<b>159</b>

## **Office of the Chief Medical Examiner Reviews:**

Under subsection 10(1) of the *Fatality Inquiries Act*, the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (CME) is required to conduct a review of the services provided by a child and family services agency under the following circumstances:

“If the chief medical examiner receives an inquiry report about a deceased child who, at the time of death of the child or within the one year period before the death,

- (a) was in the care of an agency as defined in *The Child and Family Services Act*; or
- (b) had a parent or guardian who was in receipt of services from an agency under *The Child and Family Services Act*.”

As further specified in the *Fatality Inquiries Act*, the purpose of the review is to “assess the quality or standard of care and services provided by the agency”. Under provincial standards, agencies are required to immediately report such occurrences to the Director of Child and Family Services.

In the findings section of the report, the CME may recommend that specific action be taken by:

- the Department of Family Services and Housing;
- the Child Protection Branch;
- one or more child and family services authorities; and/or
- one or more child and family services agencies.

During 2006/07, the General Authority received a total of five reports prepared by the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner’s Office. Under the current legislation, the scope of these reviews is limited to those services provided by a mandated child and family services agency. The General Authority will review and discuss the recommendations with the specific agencies involved and then follow up with those agencies to monitor progress of implementation. During 2006/07, the General Authority concluded 12 reports from the Chief Medical Examiner’s Office (including some reports issued in prior fiscal years). Reports are considered “concluded” when the Chief Medical Examiner found that the agency services met or exceeded standards and made no recommendations or when an agency has satisfactorily responded to recommendations that were made in the report.

During 2006/07, the General Authority received notice of 25 child deaths (compared to 33 in 2005/06). In most instances, the family had received service within the previous 12 months but the case was not open at the time of the child’s death. In the majority of cases, the death was due to natural causes (close to 70%). Accidents accounted for a further 16%. The General Authority also noted a reduction in the number of child deaths due to violence.

## Children in Care

The General Authority regularly tracks trends regarding the number of children in care of its agencies. This is tracked and analyzed by legal status, age and other variables. When there is a noticeable increase in children in care, the General Authority will follow up with the agencies involved to gain further explanatory information about this trend. As shown in the table below, the General Authority agencies experienced a 4.7% increase in the number of children in care when compared with the previous fiscal year.

### CHILD IN CARE STATISTICS

General Authority	2005/2006	2006/2007
Central	73	101
Western	111	130
Churchill	16	17
Eastman	133	158
Interlake	46	64
JCFS	16	18
Northern	83	93
Parkland	19	20
Winnipeg	1049	1017
Total:	1546	1618

## INTERSECTORAL COMMITTEE WORK

Staff at the General Authority also work in collaboration with its agencies, the Child Protection Branch (CPB), the Community Service Delivery Branch (CSD), colleague Authorities, and other external stakeholders on a number of systemic program and policy issues. Following is an overview of this intersectoral work and a description of committees that involve representatives from the General Authority.

### **The Provincial Advisory Committee on Child Abuse (PACCA)**

The General Authority Program Specialist represents the General Authority and its agencies at PACAC and sit on the PACCA Abuse Interviewing Committee. This Committee is focused on developing up to date child abuse interviewing tools and training material for social workers. The committee identified the need for a tool to be developed in Manitoba given the absence of an up to date Canadian abuse interview training video. This resource was identified as a gap in Canada thus far. The committee has now completed the majority of the filming and has advanced to the post-production phase. The initiative was specifically developed to meet the needs of social service providers, specifically social workers particularly in more isolated geographical locations where resources are less accessible. Culturally appropriate approaches and representation of First Nations are key in the project, which is supported by all four Authorities. The University of Manitoba has also expressed interest in utilizing the final product for training of social workers in the Social Work program. The video training material will be accompanied by a guide.

### **Child Health and Women's Health Program Committee**

This committee has been working to develop a communication algorithm to facilitate the communication of critical child specific information between the Child Health and Women's Health Program, Health Sciences Centre and Child and Family Services. The purpose of the committee is to improve the quality and accountability for the care of these children as they move along the care continuum from the community to the hospital and back to the community. Thus far, the committee has finalized: a) Child and Women's Health –Child and Family Services Algorithm; b) Newborn and Children Under Apprehension Discharge Planning Policy which has been instituted as a Level I WRHA Regional Policy; c) Child and Family Services Referral Form Suspicion of Infant or Child in Need of Protection which is being utilized at the Health Sciences Centre and Regionally by Adult Mental Health and the Emergency Regional Program and; d) a summary results from the pilot of the Child and Family Services Referral Form. The Committee is continuing its work and is at present working with the Child Protection Branch on the use of the child well being windows in CFSIS related to medical information for children involved with child welfare.

### **Youth Suicide Prevention**

On February 24, 2006, the General Authority Program Specialist participated in the Youth Suicide Prevention meeting offered by the Office of the Children Advocate (OCA). As a result of this meeting, the OCA agreed to be a central gathering place for suicide prevention program information. The Youth Suicide Prevention Resource Information Newsletters were subsequently released by the OCA in November 2006 and May 2007.

## **RONA Scholarship Committee**

In July 2006, a Program Specialist chaired the inter-authority RONA Scholarship Committee. The RONA Scholarship fund through the Children's Aid Foundation of Ontario provided a \$5000.00 scholarship to former youth in care pursuing their education. The successful recipients were:

Ayishvitie Reid	The General Child and Family Services Authority
Heather Swayne	Metis Child and Family Services Authority
Verna Cowley	First Nations of Northern Manitoba CFS Authority
Penelope Sutherland	First Nations of Southern Manitoba CFS Authority

## **Alternative Care Sub-Committee**

This sub-committee is a resource to Standing Committee whose purpose is to identify and report on issues related to alternative care which require the attention of the Standing Committee, to act on such issues where appropriate and to carry out tasks as assigned by the Standing Committee.

## **Communications Sub-committee**

This sub-committee is a resource to Standing Committee with respect to issues pertaining to communication. The main task this past year was coordinating information regarding the mandating of the All-Nations Coordinated Response Agency.

## **Permanent Ward Transfer Sub-Committee**

This sub-committee is a resource to Standing Committee with respect to the development of a standardized process for the transfer of permanent wards to their Culturally Appropriate Authority. A draft protocol has been tabled with Standing Committee for approval.

## **Partners in Parenting Committee**

The purpose of this committee is to examine the services parents with cognitive disabilities have access to and to assist in the development of an interdepartmental government protocol to promote integrated services. A survey of caseworkers in the Supported Living Program and Children's Special Services was completed. The results are currently being analyzed, with recommendations being developed.

## **Edgewood Program Steering Committee**

The purpose of the committee is to provide advice to Macdonald Youth Services in order to strengthen the Edgewood Program's treatment services and to provide a forum in which the needs of youthful (including young adult) offenders can be identified, with options developed for meeting those needs.

## **Adoption Manual Committee**

The goal of this committee, which is headed up by the Child Protection Branch, is to develop a "how to" manual for adoption workers. A major portion of the manual has been completed and sent out to pilot agencies for feedback.

## **Keith Cooper Scholarship Committee**

This spring, the committee awarded scholarships to 8 recipients including Tom Provost, Brooke Penner, Jerri-Lynn Chester, Shirley Haynes, Shimon Segal, Darren McGilles, Michael Rocan and Verna Cowley.

*Teamwork is the ability to work together toward a common vision. The ability to direct individual accomplishments toward organizational objectives. It is the fuel that allows common people to obtain uncommon results.*

Andrew Carnegie