
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Children and Family Development

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS IMPROVED MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

VICTORIA – Implementation over the past five years of the child and youth mental health plan has created a solid foundation of effective programs and services that can now be built on, announced Children and Family Development Minister Tom Christensen today as he released the Child and Youth Mental Health Plan Progress Report.

“Over the past five years, we have seen much greater emphasis on prevention, early intervention, and a strengthening of family and community capacity to support children and youth with mental health problems,” said Christensen. “The ministry will now carry out community consultations to identify remaining service gaps and set priorities so we can continue to deliver effective mental health services for children and youth.”

One in seven children and youth experience mental health problems serious enough to cause significant distress and impair their functioning at home, at school, with their peers and in the community. Since implementation of the mental health plan, nearly 20,000 children and youth with mental health challenges have received mental health support annually, in contrast to only 11,000 who received support in 2004/05.

The Child and Youth Mental Health Plan was launched in 2003, and established B.C. as a national leader in child and youth mental health. The progress report outlines key successes, strategies and initiatives undertaken in four areas: reducing risk; building capacity; improving treatment and support; and improving performance.

Highlights include:

- Introduction of a classroom-based anxiety prevention program in elementary schools;
- Development of a self-help resource, *Dealing with Depression: Anti-depressant Skills for Teens*;
- Creation of approximately 300 new mental health positions in B.C. over the last three years; and
- Establishment of group treatment programs and services outside traditional office settings, new multicultural outreach services, and Kids in Control groups to assist children and youth living in families with parental mental illness.

The ministry will consult with stakeholders in June and July to review the impact of the work of the past five years on the child and youth mental health service system. Feedback from the communities will help determine next steps to continue to provide the tools, training and expertise to support ongoing improvement in child and youth mental health services.

1 backgrounder(s) attached.

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