

**Advocate for Children and Youth responds to report on recommendations
for a provincial poverty reduction strategy**

SASKATOON – The Advisory Group on Poverty Reduction presented its recommendations to Social Services Minister Donna Harpauer on Monday. Bob Pringle, Saskatchewan’s Advocate for Children and Youth, welcomed the Advisory Group’s ambitious goal of reducing poverty in the province by 50% by 2020, measured using the 2012 Market Basket Measure.

“I want to thank the Advisory Group for their thoughtful work on this important issue, highlighting that we all need to commit to reducing poverty in the province to protect and promote the rights and dignity of everyone in the province,” said Pringle. “By consulting with people who are most affected by poverty, the Advisory Group has been able to develop a comprehensive set of recommendations to reduce poverty that can inform the government’s forthcoming Poverty Reduction Strategy.”

Pringle commended the provincial government for having the foresight to put together this advisory group, made up of six community members and five representatives from across government. They developed recommendations in six priority areas: income security; housing and homelessness; early childhood development; education and training; employment and health; and food security.

“The Advisory Group’s proposed principles – with their emphasis on things like partnerships, building on strengths, and accountability– are fundamentally sound,” he said, “as are their key priority areas.”

The Advocate for Children and Youth has been calling on the provincial government to develop and implement well-resourced early childhood development and poverty reduction strategies for some time, including making a formal recommendation in *Two Tragedies: Holding Systems Accountable*, the child death report released in May 2014 into the death of a child in foster care.

Pringle was pleased to see that the Advisory Group views early childhood development as a cornerstone of a Saskatchewan poverty reduction strategy, with recommendations to expand developmentally-appropriate and culturally-inclusive services to give families real choices and concrete support to raise their children.

Throughout his tenure as Advocate, Pringle has focused on the need to address the factors that put children and youth at risk – poverty and its related conditions, mental illness, addictions, racism and the legacy of colonialism, violence, and disabilities.

“I’m looking forward to the provincial government’s response to the Advisory Group’s recommendations,” he said. “We will continue to champion concrete actions that advance the rights of children and youth in our province, and in so doing, reduce poverty’s long shadow on the well-being of all residents of the province, young and old alike.”

The Advocate for Children and Youth is an independent officer of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan. He leads a team of advocates, investigators and other staff who work on behalf of the province's young people. Our vision is that the rights, interests and well-being of children and youth are respected and valued in our communities and in government legislation, policy, programs and practice.

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