

**Advocate for Children and Youth Lauds Development of Provincial  
Mental Health and Addictions Strategy**

SASKATOON – Bob Pringle, Advocate for Children and Youth, expressed his support for the development of a provincial mental health and addictions strategy as a positive step for Saskatchewan children and youth.

“There are reliable estimates that 15% of children and youth have mental health challenges. It is well documented that those experiencing mental health and substance abuse problems typically wait a number of years before asking for, or receiving professional help,” said Pringle.

Pringle noted that he has pressed the Government for collaborative action on these issues, including in his recently released Annual Report. “The challenges for children, youth and families cut across Ministry lines,” said Pringle. “We are very pleased to see that this important initiative will be part of the Child and Family Agenda, rather than leaving it to one specific sector or Ministry.”

At the same time, Pringle indicated his interest in seeing that important initiatives are not put on hold while the plan is being developed. “Youth suicide, mental health and substance abuse issues in families involved with the child welfare system, and service access challenges are among the issues that require action now, while we work collaboratively on future directions.”

“We look forward to active input into development of a plan for improved mental health and addictions services,” Pringle said. “Through collaboration, innovation and investment, Saskatchewan has the potential to become the best place to live for all children, youth and families – not only in Canada, but in the world.”

The Advocate for Children and Youth is an independent officer of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan who has the responsibility to advise the provincial government on matters related to children and youth.

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