

February 25, 2008

Marvin Bernstein, B.A., LL.B., LL.M.
Children's Advocate
315 - 25th Street East
SASKATOON SK S7K 2H6

Dear Mr. Bernstein:

Re: Wi Ci Ti Zon Group Home

I am writing to notify you that, effective February 22, 2008, we are revoking the section related to delegated authority to provide residential services via Wi Ci Ti Zon Group Home in the Yorkton Tribal Council (YTC) Child and Family Services (CFS) delegation agreement. We are also moving the remaining youth to an alternate placement.

My officials will be advising our regional offices and our colleagues in the First Nations Child and Family Services (FNCFS) offices to suspend referrals. The ministry continues to receive reports that suggest the safety of residents and staff is being compromised. The suspension will remain in effect until the following conditions have been satisfied:

Safety and Behaviour Management

1. The group home will establish clear policies outlining processes and the performance of tasks required to operate a safe group home. These policies will include but not be limited to: fire safety and fire evacuation policies, policies related to responding to issues involving self-harm, policies related to the dispensation of medication and the storage of potential weapons. All employees working at the group home will have received training in these procedures. In addition, all employees working at the group home will have received suicide intervention training and dispensation of medication training.

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2. All employees working in the group home will have received approved/recognized crisis intervention training. Clear policies and procedures will be in place to assist staff in managing severe behaviour. All staff will have been trained in these policies and procedures.
3. A list of all employees and the training they have received will be provided to ministry officials. All policies and procedures will be provided to ministry officials.

Rights of Children

1. All youth in care have the right to privacy. Youth in care will have bedroom doors and not curtains. In the event that a door is damaged, it will be expected that the door will be replaced within 2 working days.
2. The Children's Advocate Office will meet with the Wi Ci Ti Zon and ministry officials. Children's right to advocacy will be ensured.

Protocol Agreement

An interim protocol agreement based upon *The Residential Services Act* will be required.

In addition to the provisions outlined in *The Residential Services Act*, the protocol will include the requirements related to: Safety, Behaviour Management and Rights of Children outlined above. Also, Wi Ci Ti Zon will be required to provide to the ministry on an ongoing basis, the information outlined in Appendix 3 (see attached) of the 4 Directions protocol agreement.

The plan submitted by Wi Ci Ti Zon

On February 14, 2008, the ministry received a document from Wi Ci Ti Zon outlining their plan designed to address concerns raised by youth, community members, the ministry and your office. The plan successfully addresses most of the major issues. Significant portions of it have been incorporated into the requirements outlined above.

However, in light of the ongoing issues related to safety and behaviour management, the conclusion of the ministry is that we have no alternative but to require the immediate implementation of several of these measures before Wi Ci Ti Zon resumes operations.

We encourage Wi Ci Ti Zon to proceed with implementation of their action plan once issues related to safety, behaviour management and rights of children have been addressed.

I am hopeful that these issues can be addressed in a manner that is satisfactory to everyone. As always, I appreciate the voice your office provides to children in care.

Sincerely,

Donna Harpauer

cc: Chief Philip Quwezance, Chief, Keeseekoose First Nation
Kevin Musqua, Board Chair, Wi Ci Ti Zon Group Home
Duncan Fisher, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Social Services
Shelley Whitehead, Assistant Deputy Minister, Ministry of Social Services
Andrea Brittin, Executive Director, Child and Family Services