



# Representative's Report

July 9, 2008  
Update #3

## Critical Injuries and Deaths: RCY Reviews and Investigations

### Purpose

The purpose of the Representative for Children and Youth's reviews and investigations of child deaths or critical injuries is to identify and thoughtfully analyze recurring issues -- particularly in service delivery. The intent is to help prevent similar deaths or injuries in the future, and to inform improvements to services.

Independently reviewing these deaths and critical injuries is an important element of quality assurance. These reviews and investigations are done in a timely, fair, respectful and thorough manner.

### Reporting Period: February 1 – May 31, 2008 \*

During this reporting period, 48 critical injuries and 26 deaths of BC children and youth who were in care or receiving reviewable services within the previous year were reported to the office of the Representative for Children and Youth (RCY).

These have all undergone an initial screening by the Representative and her staff to determine whether an RCY Review (defined on page 5) is necessary. The results of this initial screening are on the following pages.

\* This information is based on reports received by the RCY office at the time of this update. These numbers may change if additional reports of critical injuries or deaths which occurred in this reporting period are subsequently received by the RCY.



**Critical Injuries:** (Reporting Period: February 1 – May 31, 2008)

It has been determined that 36 of the 48 critical injuries reported did not meet criteria for review under the Representative's legislative mandate.

An RCY Review will be undertaken on the remaining 12 critical injuries.

Critical Injuries	Total Number Reported	Selected for RCY Review
Under 1 year old	3	-
Age 1 – 5 years	-	-
Age 6 – 12 years	9	-
Age 13 – 18 years	36	12
Total	48	12

Of the 12 critical injuries selected for an RCY Review:

Critical Injuries To Be Reviewed	Child or Youth In Care	Child or Youth Not In Care *
Under 1 year old	-	-
Age 1 – 5 years	-	-
Age 6 – 12 years	-	-
Age 13 – 18 years	10	2
Total	10	2

\* A child or youth who received reviewable services such as child protection, family support, youth justice, mental health or addiction services at the time of the incident or in the year previous. These children and youth were not "in care" at the time of the incident.

Three of the 12 critical injuries were Aboriginal youth.



**Deaths:** (Reporting Period: February 1 – May 31, 2008)

It has been determined that 11 of the 26 deaths reported did not meet criteria for review under the Representative's legislative mandate.

An RCY Review will be undertaken on the remaining 15 deaths.

Deaths	Total Number Reported	Selected for RCY Review
Under 1 year old	4	3
Age 1 – 5 years	5	3
Age 6 – 12 years	5	2
Age 13 – 18 years	12	7
Total	26	15

Of the 15 child deaths selected for an RCY Review:

Deaths	Child or Youth in Care	Child or Youth Not In Care*
Under 1 year old	-	3
Age 1 – 5 years	-	3
Age 6 – 12 years	-	2
Age 13 – 18 years	2	5
Total	2	13

\* A child or youth who received reviewable services such as child protection, family support, youth justice, mental health or addiction services at the time of the incident or in the year previous. These children and youth were not "in care" at the time of the incident.

Eleven of the 15 deaths were Aboriginal children or youth.



## Overall Summary:<sup>1</sup>

**June 1, 2007<sup>2</sup> – May 31, 2008**

During this period, 160 critical injuries and 83 deaths of BC children and youth who were in care or who were receiving reviewable services within the previous year were reported to the Office of the Representative for Children and Youth. All have received an initial screening.

Of the 160 critical injuries, an RCY Review will be undertaken on 85.

Of the 83 deaths, an RCY Review will be undertaken on 36.

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<sup>1</sup> This information is based on reports received by the RCY at the time of this update. These numbers may change if additional reports of critical injuries or deaths which occurred in this reporting period are subsequently received by the RCY.

<sup>2</sup> The reporting period begins June 1, 2007 because Part 4 of the Representative for Children and Youth Act was proclaimed on that date, giving the RCY legislative power to conduct reviews and investigations.

## Select Standing Committee Referrals Update:

Additionally, the Select Standing Committee on Children and Youth referred 12 deaths and one critical injury that occurred prior to June 1, 2007, when legislation was passed giving the RCY power to conduct reviews and investigations.

- RCY Investigations into four of the deaths have been completed and a public report was released in April 2008.
- RCY Investigations are being considered for eight of the deaths (not included in Summary numbers above).
- An RCY Investigation of the critical injury is underway (not included in Summary numbers above).



## DEFINITIONS

### **RCY Initial Screening:**

The RCY receives reports of critical injuries or deaths of children who were in care or receiving reviewable services at the time of the incident, or in the year previous. These reports receive an 'initial screening' to determine if they meet the criteria, under the *Representative for Children and Youth Act*, for an RCY Review (defined below).

### **RCY Review:**

Critical injuries and deaths that do meet the criteria under the *Representative for Children and Youth Act* proceed to an RCY Review, which examines the circumstances and the services delivered to the child.

This may include examining medical records, Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) case files, relevant policies and standards. As well, consultation with the Coroners Service and discussions with service providers, caregivers and parents may occur.

The purpose of an RCY Review is to determine if there are service delivery issues or other circumstances that would require an RCY Investigation (defined below). Reviews are also aggregated to identify and analyze recurring circumstances or trends, to improve the effectiveness and responsiveness of reviewable services.

### **RCY Investigation:**

The Representative initiates an RCY Investigation when the circumstances of the injury or death are suspicious, self-inflicted, or when there is a question as to whether neglect, abuse or services the child received may have played a role in events leading to the injury or death.

By law, an RCY Investigation must not inhibit the work of others. An RCY Investigation does not proceed until police investigations and criminal court proceedings are completed. If there are no criminal proceedings, the RCY Investigation proceeds when other processes, such as ministry reviews or coroner's inquests, are completed, or one year after the incident, whichever is earlier.

RCY Investigation reports are presented to the Select Standing Committee on Children and Youth, and publicly released.

### **Reviewable Services:**

Reviewable services are services or programs under the *Child, Family and Community Service Act* and the *Youth Justice Act*; mental health services for children; addiction services for children; services to children with special needs delivered by MCFD and Community Living B.C.; and additional "designated services" that may be designated under a Regulation.

### **Multi-Disciplinary Team:**

The RCY's Multi-Disciplinary Team brings together experts in the field to assist in analyzing information gained in reviews and investigations.

Experts in public health, medicine, pathology, Aboriginal issues, policing, education, child welfare and service delivery, services to children and youth with special needs, MCFD and the Coroners Service meet to review evidence from individual cases and from groups of similar cases. The Multi-Disciplinary Team provides advice to the Representative on strategies to help prevent similar deaths or injuries in the future and to inform improvements to services.