

## Chapter 33

# Social Services—Supervision of Community-Based Organizations

### 1.0 MAIN POINTS

The Ministry of Social Services provides programs and services for people with intellectual disabilities, works with them, and helps them access a variety of community-based services. The Ministry uses 105 community-based organizations (CBOs) to deliver residential programs to about 1,500 people and day programs to about 2,500 people with intellectual disabilities. *The Residential Services Act* and *The Rehabilitation Act* give the Ministry the authority to enter into agreements with those CBOs.

This chapter describes our second follow-up of the actions of the Ministry on the five remaining recommendations we initially made in our 2012 audit of the Ministry's processes to plan for, contract with, and monitor CBOs providing services to intellectually disabled people and their families.

By March 15, 2017, the Ministry had improved its processes to monitor CBOs serving intellectually disabled people and their families but further improvements are needed.

The Ministry followed its established procedures to obtain required CBO reports and analyzed serious incidents but it did not consistently follow the monitoring procedures as outlined in the agreements with CBOs. The Ministry continued to work on establishing outcome performance measures and targets to better monitor and evaluate the services CBOs deliver. The Ministry was reviewing its risk assessment processes and working to update the relevant policies.

### 2.0 INTRODUCTION

Our *2012 Report – Volume 1*, Chapter 22 reports the results of our audit of the Ministry's processes to plan for, contract with, and monitor CBOs providing services to intellectually disabled people and their families. We made eight recommendations to help the Ministry strengthen its processes. By September 2014, as reported in our *2014 Report – Volume 2*, Chapter 55, the Ministry had implemented three of the eight recommendations.

To conduct this review engagement, we followed the standards for assurance engagements published in the *CPA Canada Handbook – Assurance*. To evaluate the Ministry's progress towards meeting our recommendations, we used the relevant criteria from the original audit. The Ministry's management agreed with the criteria in the original audit.

To perform our follow-up on our recommendations, we discussed actions taken with management, reviewed relevant documentation (e.g., policy and procedures manuals, serious incident reports), and tested a sample of CBO agreements.



## 3.0 STATUS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

This section sets out each recommendation including the date on which the Standing Committee on Public Accounts agreed to the recommendation, the status of the recommendation at March 15, 2017, and the Ministry's actions up to that date. We found that the Ministry implemented two recommendations and is making progress towards implementing the other three recommendations.

### 3.1 Work to Include Outcome Performance Measures Underway

We recommended that the Ministry of Social Services work with community-based organizations (CBOs) to establish program objectives, and outcome performance measures and targets to be used to monitor and evaluate the services CBOs deliver to intellectually disabled people and their families. (2012 Report – Volume 1; Public Accounts Committee agreement June 17, 2014)

**Status** – Partially Implemented

At mid-March 2017, the Ministry had not yet established overall outcome-based measures and targets for service delivery at each CBO. Its agreements with CBOs continue to set out core outcomes and indicators for meeting the needs of each individual residing in group homes or utilizing day programs.

In April 2015, a task team consisting of representatives from the Ministry, the CBO sector, and the Saskatchewan Association for Rehabilitation Centres<sup>1</sup> began working on a CBO sustainability project. As part of this project, the task team is looking at outcome-based service delivery based on the assessed needs of clients. The Ministry expects the task team to finalize an outcomes framework in 2016-17 and pilot it with six CBOs in 2017-18.

Including outcome performance measures and targets in the agreements with CBOs would allow the Ministry to better evaluate CBO performance and assess if the services delivered achieved the results the Ministry had intended.

### 3.2 Policies and Procedures Being Reviewed

We recommended that the Ministry of Social Services develop and implement policies and procedures for addressing risks identified in community-based organizations that provide services to individuals with intellectual disabilities. (2012 Report – Volume 1; Public Accounts Committee agreement June 17, 2014)

**Status** – Partially Implemented

<sup>1</sup> The Saskatchewan Association for Rehabilitation Centres (SARC) is an association of 90 CBOs that provide services in the areas of residential supports, employment supports, and recreational/volunteer activities for people experiencing disability. SARC assists the CBOs by providing training, services, consulting, and leadership.

The Ministry has not updated its *Policy Manual for CBO Accountability* (manual) since 2011. In addition, it has not developed several key policies (e.g., assessing preliminary risk, risk management) relating to CBO risk assessments.

During 2016-17, the Ministry began reviewing its risk assessment process. This included reviewing its policies and procedures for monitoring high-risk CBOs. For example, the Ministry is revisiting its policy for CBO reporting requirements based on assessed risk of the CBOs. The Ministry expects to complete this review and update its manual in the fall of 2017.

Without complete policies, it is difficult for the Ministry to communicate expectations to its staff and hold them accountable. The lack of formal policies could also lead to staff completing inconsistent CBO risk assessments.

### 3.3 Established Policies Followed

We recommended that the Ministry of Social Services require its staff to follow established policies to obtain all required reports that are not submitted by the due date from community-based organizations that provide services to individuals with intellectual disabilities on the Ministry's behalf. (2012 Report – Volume 1; Public Accounts Committee agreement June 17, 2014)

**Status** – Implemented

For the sample of CBO files we examined, only a few reports (i.e., 3 out of 50) were not submitted on time. We found that staff followed the Ministry's established policies to obtain all the required CBO reports that were past due.

### 3.4 Monitoring Procedures Not Consistently Followed

We recommended that the Ministry of Social Services follow their established monitoring procedures as outlined in their agreements with community-based organizations that provide services to individuals with intellectual disabilities. (2012 Report – Volume 1; Public Accounts Committee agreement June 17, 2014)

**Status** – Partially Implemented

Staff are not consistently completing reviews of CBOs within expected intervals.

The agreements with CBOs require Ministry staff to do the following review steps at least once every two years: review CBOs' policies and procedures, verify compliance with those policies and procedures, and develop action plans to address non-compliance.

The Ministry formally tracks when it last reviewed each CBO. Based on its tracking, we determined that staff had not done the review steps for 29% of the CBOs within the last



two years. We also found that the Ministry has not conducted the review at four CBOs for over ten years.

Management indicated it plans to have all the outstanding reviews completed within the next two years.

Lack of timely monitoring increases the risk that CBOs may not achieve the Ministry's objectives.

### 3.5 Serious Incidents Analyzed

We recommended that the Ministry of Social Services analyze and document its review of serious incidents and incident trends at community-based organizations that provide services to individuals with intellectual disabilities and determine how to address the increasing trend in incidents. (2012 Report – Volume 1; Public Accounts Committee agreement June 17, 2014)

**Status** – Implemented

On a quarterly and yearly basis, staff prepare and give management a report on serious incidents at CBOs. The reports track the serious incidents by type, region, sector, and agency to monitor any developing trends. The quarterly reports contain trends from one quarter to the next and year-over-year. The annual reports also contain five-year trends.

In addition, information in these reports helps the Ministry identify CBOs experiencing high levels of serious incidents. For example, the Ministry noticed a high number of serious incidents at one CBO. The Ministry worked with that CBO; it provided additional training and supports to help the CBO reduce the number of serious incidents. The number of serious incidents at this CBO decreased by 62% from 2014-15 to 2015-16.