

November 12, 2013

# **Children and Youth report highlights need for BC Social Policy Framework**

Vancouver—The most recent report by the Representative for Children and Youth, Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond, *When Talk Trumps Service, A Decade of Lost Opportunity for Aboriginal Children in B.C.*, is a sad reminder that good intentions are not enough when tackling complex social issues. Board Voice, a provincial group of community social service volunteer directors, is calling on the government to create a Social Policy Framework to avoid this kind of waste in the future.

Turpel-Lafond reports, “More than \$66 million has been spent without any functional public policy framework, no meaningful financial or performance accountability, and without any actual children receiving additional services because of these expenditures.”

Carol Matusicky, Chair of Board Voice believes this shocking example of waste points to a more systemic problem. “If we’re not organized at the top, we won’t be organized on the frontlines, where the help is so desperately needed.”

Currently BC has no overarching framework to guide the work of social ministries and related community organizations in the province. There is no all-embracing vision, goals, and

accountabilities, which could help bring new approaches to difficult issues. A social policy framework could provide that kind of guidance.

“The issues affecting Aboriginal and non-aboriginal individuals and families are not easy to deal with in silos,” says Matusicky. “For example, employment, housing, health care, child protection, day care, food security, and disability supports, are generally linked. They require solutions that are linked across government ministries and from government to community organizations to business.”

“We hope the Representative’s report on this failed public policy direction will spur work towards the development of a social policy framework for B.C.,” adds Matusicky. “We must do better than this for the children.”

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