



**Ontario Association of  
Residences Treating Youth**

*Centre of Excellence for Residential Care in Ontario*

## **OARTY's Statement on Ontario Child Advocate's Investigative Reports**

May 3, 2019

The Ontario Child Advocate's office released its final investigative reports on Tuesday, April 30, before closing its office permanently. The Ontario Association of Residences Treating Youth (OARTY) read all three of the Advocate's reports with great interest.

OARTY read with interest and concern regarding the challenges and short-comings identified in the Advocates' investigative [report](#) into three foster homes in Thunder Bay operated by Johnson's Children's Services. We recognize the important and complex work of the child welfare and residential services sector, and are committed to continuing to work with our partners at all levels to ensure that the children, youth and young adults in care receive safe, high quality treatment and care that meets their needs. We continue to work with the Ministry and other stakeholders to ensure that all residential placements are appropriately licensed, have the appropriate oversight and are held accountable to high standards of care.

OARTY supports the recommendation included in the report for clearer definitions of categories of care, including levels of care and treatment. We also support the call for consistent standards of care and base levels of training for staff.

We support an oversight system where placing agencies and the Ministry are working more closely together and sharing information to ensure that all parties are aware of any issues or concerns. There should be a process in place where one body is responsible for conducting investigations and is also tasked with sharing the findings of those investigations with all those involved in the provision of care (as opposed to the current system where both the Ministry and the placing agencies are conducting separate investigations).

OARTY has been working with the Ministry and other stakeholders to refine the usage of special rate agreements to ensure that all parties are aware of what is included in the rate, and that there is a high level of transparency and accountability built into the system.

OARTY has been advocating for many years for changes to the rate review/ rate set process to ensure that children and youth are adequately funded, and that there is transparency and accountability on all sides. This includes advocating for a process to access increased funding for staff wage increases and the cost of living, as currently per diems cannot be altered based on those criteria. It is important that the per diem take into account the true cost of providing care to ensure that appropriate levels of trained staff are available to protect the children and youth in care, and to ensure that appropriate levels of food and provisions are provided. The rate process, including special rate agreements, should have clear criteria for providing extra staff support when necessary to support the needs of the child.

OARTY supports the breaking down of artificial silos and barriers to information sharing between all parties involved in the provision of care. We would recommend that the findings of reports such as this one are used to ensure appropriate systems planning. There is a strong need to map current services in the province of Ontario to identify any gaps in services. We are concerned about the lack of appropriate services in the north and are committed to working with our partners to find solutions that are in the best interest of the child.



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OARTY is committed to continuing to work with our partners to improve the sector and to improve outcomes for children and youth. We, as a sector, must ensure that all children and youth have access to the high-quality supports and services that they need when they need them.

We wish to recognize the important work of the Provincial Advocate's Office. The Provincial Advocate and his office played an important role in the sector and we enjoyed working with them to push for improvements. We will seek to continue this relationship with the Ombudsman and his office as they begin their work with the child welfare and residential care sectors.

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