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**REVIEWER MAKES RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING CHILD DEATH**

WHITEHORSE – The Department of Health and Social Services today has released the findings and recommendations flowing from a review of a child death.

Six-week-old Samara Olsen died in Dawson City in August 2004. In Nov. 2005, her mother was convicted of manslaughter and is currently serving a six-year sentence.

Health and Social Services Deputy Minister John Greschner said he ordered the review because it was important to determine if the department's Family and Children's Services branch had met the mandate and standards for child welfare services.

The review was conducted by Jan Christianson-Wood, a Manitoba specialist, who has worked as a special investigator for the Manitoba Office of the Chief Medical Examiner and who lectures on risk assessment and child death investigations.

“The reviewer found that, in this case, some important aspects of the services did not meet the requirements and standards for child welfare services under the *Children's Act* and the policies and procedures in place in the department,” Greschner said. “Shortcomings were identified in the areas of risk assessment, sharing of information among service providers, the quality of case management and the quality of documentation and file management.”

Christianson-Wood made 18 recommendations in seven separate areas. These recommendations include such things as introducing mandatory reporting of child abuse and neglect and the creation of child abuse committees. Other recommendations include the creation of a staff position, a Child Abuse Coordinator or Specialist, to ensure all staff has access to an individual with specialized training; creation of a Child Abuse Registry; and an expansion of services to teen parents to help meet the unique needs of children parenting children.

“We have received very valuable input from this report,” Greschner added. “And it is important for the public to know that we will be acting upon these recommendations.”

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Attached: Jan Christianson-Wood bio backgrounder

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## **BIO BACKGROUNDER**

### **Jan Christianson-Wood, MSW, RSW**

Jan Christianson-Wood is a Registered Social Worker in the Province of Manitoba. She has worked in the field of child welfare as a line worker, a researcher and as a Special Investigator for Manitoba's Office of the Chief Medical Examiner. Ms. Christianson-Wood speaks on the topics of risk assessment and child death investigations at conferences and to University classes in social work. She is a member of the Board of the Manitoba Association of Social Workers and sits on the Canadian Association of Social Workers' Children's Issues committee and the provincial Children's Issues Committee. She has co-authored publications on the topics of risk assessment and child death reviews.