



News Release

For Immediate Release

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GOOD PROGRESS MADE, BUT MORE STILL NEEDS TO BE DONE

(TORONTO) Auditor General Jim McCarter today delivered a special report to the Minister of Children and Youth Services on a follow-up review of two 2006 audits relating to child welfare.

“For the most part, our follow-up review found that the government and the Children’s Aid Societies took the recommendations in our 2006 Annual Report seriously and are making progress implementing them,” McCarter said. “But there’s still more to do to ensure the needs of vulnerable children in Ontario are met.”

The ministry has made good progress enhancing certain aspects of its oversight of Societies and has improved its serious-occurrence and complaint-reporting processes. However, not enough progress has been made to ensure that all Societies are funded equitably, nor has the ministry adequately addressed the significant differences in per diem rates for foster care across the province.

The four Children’s Aid Societies we reviewed have tightened controls for acquiring goods and services. While new quality assurance processes have been introduced to better assess compliance with ministry child protection standards, more needs to be done by the Societies to ensure that those standards are being consistently met.

“Overall, I’m encouraged by the progress to date,” McCarter said. “I urge the government and Children’s Aid Societies to build on the progress made to date.”

The Auditor General’s Office normally conducts follow-up reviews two years after an audit is performed; however, the former Minister requested under Section 17 of the Auditor General Act that the follow-up reviews of the two audits be done one year earlier.

Results of the 2006 audit of the Child Welfare Services Program showed that in spite of the doubling of program spending between 1999/2000 and 2004/2005, the ministry needed to better oversee Children’s Aid Societies to ensure that children in need are being protected and funds are well spent.

The 2006 audit of four Children’s Aid Societies in Peel, Thunder Bay, Toronto, and York, found that they needed to be more vigilant in adhering to child-welfare legislation and policy requirements to ensure children in their care were receiving appropriate services and protection.

The Office of the Auditor General of Ontario is independent of government and its administration. This independence is an essential safeguard that enables it to fulfill its auditing and reporting responsibilities objectively. The Office provides information and advice that assists the Legislative Assembly in holding the government accountable for its stewardship of public funds.

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