



Yukon Coroner's Service

Office of the Chief Coroner
PO Box 2703 (J-10A)
Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 2C6
Phone: (867) 667-5317
Fax: (867) 456-6826
Email: heather.jones@yukon.ca

August 17, 2023

The Honourable Ranj PILLAI
Premier of the Yukon
PO Box 2703
Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 2C6
(ranj.pillai@yukon.ca)

Re: Kaiya Sandra Faith STONE-KIRK

Dear Premier PILLAI:

Please find attached the Inquest Report into the death of **Kaiya Sandra Faith STONE-KIRK**, which includes the comments from the Presiding Coroner, Mara POLLOCK.

Please be advised that this report and its recommendations has been posted on the Yukon Coroners' Service public web.

I would like to draw your attention to the Jury's Recommendations directed to the Government of Yukon;

- Develop an Infant Mortality Review Committee (IMRC) for the Yukon. The IMRC membership should consist of representation from health care providers with an expertise in infant and perinatal health, public health and epidemiology, representation from First Nations community health care providers, the Yukon Coroner's Service, First Nations Child and Family Services if such a program exists, and Government of Yukon Family and Children's Services. While the details of scope, goals and objectives would be determined by the IMRC a specific focus of the committee would be to monitor and review all infant deaths within the territory with a focus on deaths that have a preventable component. The IMRC's finding and recommendations should be made public in order to reduce the likelihood of future deaths with modifiable risk factors.
- Review the Child and Family Services Act in consultation with First Nations and community partners in order to clarify roles and responsibilities under Extended Family Care Agreements.
- Develop legislation to regulate the practice of social work and social workers in Yukon.

- Provide financial support to FCS to implement recommendations directed to them.
- Consider a public inquiry into the timing and notification of family and caregivers upon Kaiya Stone-Kirk's death, and any appropriate recommendations for improvements for policies and procedures.

And for your information, I further draw your attention to the Jury's Recommendations directed specifically to Family and Children's Services:

- Develop a safe sleep practice policy that:
 - Includes up to date information;
 - Explains the reasoning behind various safe sleep practices;
 - Mandates that safe sleep practices information is provided each and every time Family and Children's Services is involved in facilitating the provision of resources, support or financial payment to people who provide short-term or overnight care for infants;
 - Mandates that regional offices maintain a sufficient stock of Health Canada approved safe sleep equipment for use when required;
 - Informs Family and Children's Services employees of the importance of communicating in a manner that takes into account the principles of harm reduction and trauma-informed communication.
- Develop and incorporate policies respecting the stock of safe sleep equipment including:
 - staff review and understanding of owners' manuals;
 - staff understanding of the appropriate use of equipment in consideration of the infant's age, size, and weight;
 - owners' manuals are provided to the caregiver when equipment is loaned;
 - copies of owners' manuals are maintained at the regional office.
- Provide mandatory in-person training on the safe sleep policy every two years for Family and Children's Services employees. This training must be developed using the principles of cultural safety, harm reduction, and trauma-informed communication and should include demonstrations on how to set up safe sleep spaces.
- Create clear policies that apply to Extended Family Care Agreements. These policies should ensure that Extended Family Care Agreement families have a safety plan in place for short-term urgent situations. These policies must outline the roles and responsibilities of Family and Children's Services, extended family caregivers, and people who provide short-term or overnight care for infants.

- Develop a course in collaboration with First Nations that must be completed by every person who is paid by Family and Children's Services to provide short-term or overnight care for infants. This course must include education on safe sleep practices and must be developed using the principles of cultural safety, harm reduction, and trauma-informed communication.
- With a priority for Liard First Nations and Watson Lake, in collaboration with First Nations develop a roster of people in each community that can be relied upon to provide short term or overnight care for infants and children, when a caregiver is in urgent need of such services.
- With a priority for Liard First Nation, support First Nations in the establishment of resources in their communities for the temporary care, including overnight stays, of infants and children in emergency situations.

I ask that a response setting out intentions with respect to these Recommendation specific to the Government of Yukon be received by **October 18, 2023**. Pursuant to Section 5(1)(o) of the *Coroner's Act*, this letter and any response or lack of response to the recommendations will be made public.

Sincerely,



Heather P. Jones
Chief Coroner for the Yukon Territory

Encl.

cc: Margaret STONE
Leslie de MEUILLES, counsel for Liard First Nation
Natasha WENINGER, counsel for Robin LAFLAMME

