



ALBERTA
COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL SERVICES

Office of the Minister

FEB 02 2022

Her Worship Cathy Heron
300, 8616 - 51 Avenue NW
Edmonton, AB T6E 6E6

Dear Mayor Heron:

Thank you for your letter regarding the temporary closure of the Alberta Supports Centres and access to supports for vulnerable individuals and families in Alberta's municipalities. As Minister of Community and Social Services, I welcome the opportunity to respond.

I appreciate your hard work, as both Mayor of the City of St. Albert and as President of Alberta Municipalities, in helping vulnerable Albertans overcome challenges caused by the pandemic. The government is taking COVID-19 seriously and is monitoring the situation closely. In alignment with the guidance from Alberta's Chief Medical Officer of Health, Alberta Supports Centres are temporarily suspending in-person services until further notice.

I know our community partners are experiencing a higher than average number of requests from Albertans during this unprecedented time. I understand all of the Family and Community Support Services offices have been provided with a staff contact list to ensure Albertans approaching them for services and supports are able to contact a ministry staff member to have their needs assessed.

Albertans who currently receive support from the ministry should continue to contact their caseworker or local program office directly from Monday to Friday during business hours. Alternatively, Albertans in need of supports are encouraged to contact the Alberta Supports Contact Centre by phone toll-free at 1-877-644-9992, from Monday to Friday between 7:30 a.m. and 8:00 p.m., or visit the Alberta Supports webpage at www.alberta.ca/alberta-supports.aspx.

With respect to your concerns about walk-in access to Children's Services offices, I have consulted with my colleague, the Honourable Rebecca Schulz, Minister of Children's Services, and can provide the following information.

.../2

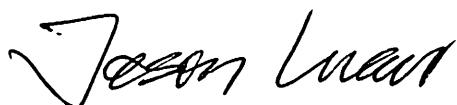
In late March 2020, the Alberta government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic closed child intervention (CI) offices to walk-in traffic. Since then, the 86 CI offices have been operating under an appointment only model. Clients in crisis or without appointments are accommodated, and the general public are responded to by phone or through a scheduled appointment. There has been no discernible impact to service delivery or responsiveness to CI concerns.

Children's Services estimates that prior to the pandemic, 42 per cent of visits were by appointment only, 31 per cent were client drop-in and, of those, only two per cent were for emergency services. Visits from the public made up 24 per cent of traffic and police visits made up two per cent.

Removing walk-in traffic increased safety for staff and clients, as some unscheduled walk-in clients could become difficult or volatile. Managing walk-in traffic at each worksite will ultimately fall to each worksite manager, but some worksites will experience higher volumes of client drop-ins. Staff are aware and prepared to assist as needed.

Thank you again for taking the time to write and advocate on behalf of vulnerable Albertans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jason Luan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial 'J'.

Jason Luan
Minister of Community and Social Services

cc: Honourable Rebecca Schulz
Minister of Children's Services