

RYTS Caregivers and Youth-in-Care at Risk

Government of Yukon Fails to Ensure Safety in Residential Care Homes

The 7 Residential Youth Treatment Services facilities in Whitehorse house children ranging from younger than 10 to 17 years old. These children have often faced abuse, neglect, uncertainty and rejection. In some cases these children can act out violently and there is increased risk for addiction and risk taking behaviour. They live in the care and custody of their legal guardian, the Director of Family and Children's Services. YEU urges the Director and Minister to conduct an immediate review of current staffing practices.

April 2015 statistics show RYTS employed 48 Auxiliary On-Call (AOC) workers to staff over 4000 shifts in the previous year. Current available stats show only 26 AOC's are being utilized as Residential Care Workers. *YG has reduced AOC use by 2,000 hours or 166 shifts since the start of this fiscal year without hiring additional permanent workers.*

A 46% reduction in scheduled AOC hours means RYTS residents and workers suffer and the risk of violent assault increases. Many of the residents have violent histories with restrictions requiring them to be kept in sight of a caregiver at all times; this is impossible in understaffed residences. Health and Safety on the job is jeopardized and our members carry a heavy burden of stress home with them at the end of each shift.

- 166 unstaffed shifts means recreational programs are not reliably maintained.
- 166 unstaffed shifts means outings are cancelled.
- 166 unstaffed shifts means increased tensions and stress in the RYTS homes.
- 166 unstaffed shifts means higher risk of violent assault by traumatized house-mates.

166 unstaffed shifts suggest Whitehorse's Residential Youth Treatment Services homes are being managed to serve the bottom line, and not to meet the needs of Yukon's most vulnerable children or the workers who care for them.

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