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By Trish Cooper

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Jessy Ardern & Daniel Bogart in
Holland. Photo by Dylan Hewlett.

Hydro, Manitoba Housing HQ to hire safety officers

NICOLE BUFFIE

MANITOBA Hydro plans to deploy institutional safety officers at its downtown headquarters, which was the site of a recent knife attack that prompted an ongoing lockdown of the building.

The provincial government updated regulations on Jan. 14 to allow institutional safety officers to be stationed at Manitoba Hydro and the Manitoba Housing & Renewal Corp. — both of which have offices downtown. The

government didn't publicly announce the change. Previously, safety officers were permitted to patrol hospitals and post-secondary institutions.

Safety officers, who are equipped with pepper gel and handcuffs, are specially trained and licensed security staff who have the legal authority to restrain, detain and make an arrest.

Hydro spokesperson Peter Chura said the Crown corporation will initially hire three security staffers with the specialized training at its 360 Portage Ave. location next week while it works

with Manitoba Justice to develop a more thorough safety officer program.

Hydro has been working with the province on the plan to deploy safety officers at its HQ and other facilities as part of its "ongoing efforts to enhance safety for our employees, customers and the public," Chura said.

About 2,000 Hydro employees work at the downtown tower.

In a statement, Justice Minister Matt Wiebe said his department has been in talks with various groups about expanding the provincial safety officer

program. The development of Hydro's program was predicated on security support for public infrastructure sites.

"Violence in downtown Winnipeg cannot be tolerated. This is exactly why our government has focused on downtown safety and took action to enhance the powers of (institutional safety officers) in Manitoba," Wiebe's statement said.

On Friday, a man armed with a knife attacked a Hydro employee in the lobby as they were leaving work. Another employee and staff from a nearby

restaurant had to intervene before security and police arrived.

The building has been on lockdown since then. Only employees are permitted in the building and people who want to access the two restaurants and dining hall must use external entrances.

Chura said the corporation is looking at implementing "physical security measures" at Manitoba Hydro Place, but wouldn't elaborate.

● HYDRO, CONTINUED ON A2



MIKAELA MACKENZIE / FREE PRESS

Winnipeg officer Kyle Pradinuk testified Wednesday about the moments before he fired at Eishia Hudson, who'd been driving a stolen vehicle pursued by police on April 8, 2020.

Inquest probes fatal shooting of 16-year-old; police summoned after Liquor Mart robbery

Constable explains decision to fire at teen

TYLER SEARLE

STARING her in the eyes, with his weapon raised and ready, a Winnipeg police officer repeatedly demanded Eishia Hudson, who was behind the wheel of a stolen vehicle, show him her hands before firing the round that killed the 16-year-old.

Const. Kyle Pradinuk spent hours testifying about the seconds before the shooting on April 8, 2020, on the third day of the provincial inquest that's probing the life and death of the Indigenous teen.

Pradinuk was among the first officers on the scene when the stolen Jeep driven by Hudson jumped the median near Lagimodiere Boulevard and Fermor Avenue, lost control and slammed into a nearby Ford truck, he said.

"The crash itself was very loud, and I could almost see the rear end of the Jeep kind of lift," Pradinuk said. "The main goal was to get to the Jeep, remove the driver and once the driver was taken into custody,

provide medical aid to everybody."

A bystander's video of the incident was played repeatedly in court, showing Pradinuk and his partner immediately sprinting toward the crash. He said they believed the Jeep was disabled and its occupants were stunned by the collision, but just as the other officer gripped the driver's-side door handle, the Jeep began to reverse.

Pradinuk said he drew his gun because he feared his partner was about to be run over.

"I'm pointing my firearm at Ms. Hudson... At this point, Ms. Hudson's looking at me, she's got her hand on the wheel," Pradinuk said.

"As soon as it started moving backwards, that's when I took a shot."

Pradinuk told the inquest panel he did not know whether the bullet had struck Hudson. He continued to shout commands at her as she stared at him through the shattered window.

Then, he saw her reach for what

he believed was the shifter and heard a grinding sound that made him think she had forced the vehicle into drive, causing it to "lurch forward," he said.

That's when he fired again.

"After my first shot, if she just continued going backward, I would not have fired again," he said.

"I was reacting to her actions. I do not know what her intent was at the time."

The inquest heard Hudson opened the door and raised her hands before Pradinuk and another officer put handcuffs on the teen.

In the moments after the shooting, Pradinuk issued a radio call saying shots had been fired and requested urgent support for an ambulance. That call never went through because the battery in his radio had been dislodged, he said.

Pradinuk went to assist with another arrest and then checked on the driver of the truck, before returning to Hudson less than a minute later.

"There was some blood in her

mouth and she started to have a hard time breathing," he said, describing how he began CPR.

An autopsy showed one of the bullets struck the teenager's shoulder and travelled through her body, lodging in her spine.

The Independent Investigation Unit of Manitoba, which probes shootings involving police, cleared Pradinuk of criminal culpability; the chief medical officer of Manitoba later ordered a review of the incident, which sparked the inquest process.

The inquest must determine whether the use of force against Hudson was justified and whether systemic racism played a role in her death.

Judge Margaret Wiebe, who cannot assign blame, is expected to issue a final report that could include recommendations on how to prevent similar tragedies.

● OFFICER, CONTINUED ON A2

Widespread transmission continues in Winkler, Morden

Manitoba has most measles cases in Canada

CHRIS KITCHING

MANITOBA has the country's highest number of reported measles infections in 2026 — a year after the province's outbreak began — while a surge brought stronger messaging from the government.

Dr. Davinder Singh, who is Manitoba's public health lead on measles, said the province is seeing its highest monthly totals since May.

"Unfortunately, we're seeing an increase in the number of detected or reported cases. We also know the number of cases that are diagnosed are only a relatively small fraction of the true number of cases out in the community," he said Wednesday.

"We can estimate that there may be about 10 times as many infections as we have that get reported to us or that get detected."

It's hard to predict when the outbreak will end, said Singh, who anticipates there are still quite a few people who are susceptible to measles in the Southern Health region alone.

He said there is still widespread transmission, particularly in Manitoba's most affected communities, which include Winkler, Morden and some of the surrounding rural municipalities.

"A lot of the people we talked to recently can't necessarily identify specific exposure to someone with measles," he said.

"There's just kind of so many people that are infected with the virus that people in those areas may be exposed in any public place that they go to in the area."

For that reason, the province is "upgrading" its messaging to strongly encourage parents of infants between six and 12 months to get an early vaccine dose for those children, Singh said.

The prevalence of cases in those communities is attributed to lower vaccine uptake. Public health officials have assured Manitobans the vaccine is safe and 97 per cent effective with two doses.

● MEASLES, CONTINUED ON A2

