

CORRECTIONS COVID-19 RESPONSE

Issue

The Minister may receive questions on Corrections response to the COVID-19 pandemic and actions taken to mitigate risks to staff and inmates.

Key Messages

- Corrections is working closely with Health and Social Services to assess procedures within the facilities and adjust operations as necessary to ensure the safety and wellbeing of both staff and inmates.
- All facilities have pandemic plans and there are regular meetings set up with medical officials to review corrections operating procedures and align them with best practices.
- The Director of Corrections has regular teleconferences with Federal and Provincial Corrections counterparts including Corrections Service Canada and heads of corrections from provincial governments who are discussing best practices for mitigating exposure to staff and inmates.
- Facility management is regularly communicating with staff and inmates on operational changes and hygiene etiquette.

Current Status

Reducing Inmates in Custody

- The Department of Justice has been actively exploring options available to reduce the number of inmates within NWT correctional facilities in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This has included investigating opportunities to grant temporary absences for releasing inmates on a case by case and risk assessed basis. As of May 7, 2020 a total of 42 temporary absences have been processed where inmates have less than 90 days remaining on their sentence and 16 have been approved.
- Housing is taken into consideration as part of the temporary absence review process. The Corrections Service will not release an individual on a temporary absence without an appropriate housing plan being in place to support their release.

Inmate Care and Wellness

- All inmates entering NWT Correctional facilities are required to be medically screened. Screening procedures have been bolstered due to COVID-19 and include:
 - A COVID-19 specific screening questionnaire
 - Temperature check (as part of regular medical screening)
 - In the event an inmate is symptomatic they are isolated in identified cells within the facilities and COVID-19 testing is arranged in conjunction with health officials. To date all tests for COVID-19 have come back negative, and currently no tests are outstanding.

- Currently there is sufficient capacity within the facilities to allow each inmate their own cell.
- The Department has attempted to keep as many activities and programs running for inmates as safely possible. There has been curtailment and cancellation of some higher risk activities including personal visits and some programming that is delivered by outside agencies, as well as programming in the community. Program size has been reduced to ensure safe distancing practices are followed. Case management and counselling services also remain in place ensuring proper protocols are followed
- All contractors attending facilities are required to be screened before entry. At this time only essential contractors are permitted. Lawyers and Elder visits are assessed on a case by case basis. Personal visits in emergency circumstances are considered on a case by case basis, and would occur behind glass where available. PPE is utilized in all circumstances.
- The Department is setting up the ability for inmates to video conference with family members and friends, recognizing that personal contact is very important for healing. This was introduced at the NSCC on May 15, 2020 and other facilities will follow once dedicated internet connections are completed.
- Any resumption of services will be done in close consultation with the Office of the Chief Public Health Officer. Currently there is no timeline as to when in person visits will be re-established.

Staff Safety

- Procedures for staff have evolved over the course of the last few months as recommendations from health officials have changed and developed.
- Currently all persons are screened upon entry into the facility for COVID-19 symptoms. Staff who identify as having symptoms upon screening at the facility are requested to go home and contact Public Health.
- The Department continues to monitor risk factors in determining appropriate procedures for staff and inmates in conjunction with health officials.
- Currently NWT correctional facilities are adequately stocked with PPE. This is reviewed on a regular basis.
- As a proactive measure and in consultation with other correctional jurisdictions, the Department has procured a material type mask for staff and inmates to be worn voluntarily which is aligned with the Chief Public Health Officer's advice on reducing transmission of COVID-19. Proper PPE protocols remain in place where required. These masks do not take the place of the use of proper PPE.
- Regular communications are sent out to staff to advise of procedural changes and to ensure safe practices are highlighted. Occupational Health and Safety meetings are held on a monthly basis at all facilities and ensure engagement with committee members on updates specific to COVID-19 practices and protocols.

- Corrections has cancelled staff annual leave through June 2020 and are currently approving leave requests on a case by case basis. Currently staffing capacity has not been challenged due to self isolations requirements for facility staff.

Facility Operations

- Safety procedures have been put in place to ensure high contact points within the facilities are sanitized several times a day. Cleaning protocols have been bolstered across all facilities.
- All facilities have contingency plans should positive COVID-19 cases occur within the facilities. There are a variety of operational contingencies that can be put into place including:
 - Isolating inmates who are sick in designated areas within the facilities;
 - Closing and/or repurposing the smaller facilities
 - Redeploying facility staff
 - As a last resort and only in the case of severe staff shortages, lock downs would be considered. This would in part be needed for the safety of redeployed staff who may have limited security training.
 - Inmates who are symptomatic will be locked down and isolated outside the living units. They would still be offered daily showers and fresh air with appropriate personal protective equipment supplied. Corrections consults with the Office of the Chief Public Health Officer to determine the best courses of action for implementing isolation and maintaining inmate wellbeing.

Community Corrections

- Probation offices across the NWT are having clients report by telephone. Arrangements are flexible as not all clients have telephone services.
- One Staff member in each of the 3 regional offices are in place, maintaining an office presence to ensure responses to court are met without delay.
- Local RCMP detachments have been advised of this change in reporting and Probation Officers continue to liaise with police on any challenges.
- Regional Probation Managers are reviewing reporting requirements on an ongoing basis to ensure compliance with court orders.

Background

- Corrections began reviewing their pandemic plans and planning for the potential spread of COVID-19 in January 2020.
- The COVID-19 virus was first detected in Wuhan, China in December 2019.
- An outbreak was declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern on January 3, 2020 by the World Health Organization (WHO).
- The COVID-19 virus was declared a pandemic by the WHO on March 11, 2020.

TEMPORARY ABSENCES FOR COMMUNITY PROGRAMMING IN FORT SMITH

Issue

The Minister may get questions regarding the temporary absence process to attend programming in the community, including on-the-land programs such as the one previously offered in Fort Smith by Poundmaker's.

Key Messages

- I am aware how important it is to provide opportunities for healing that are respectful of offenders' culture and heritage; and the Department certainly recognizes the potential benefits of land-based programming for offenders who serve their custodial sentence in Fort Smith.
- Whenever there is a community program that offenders could benefit from, Corrections seeks to identify suitable inmates who could participate, through the temporary absence program.
- Inmates wishing to attend on-the-land programming in the community such as at Poundmaker's must apply for an unescorted temporary absence from the facility in order to participate. To ensure the safety of the public at large and of victims there are strict established criteria for an inmate to be considered for an unescorted temporary absence.
- At the same time, FSCC provides criminogenic programming in-house to address most common issues (such as addictions) that lead an offender to crime. These programs are geared specifically to the needs of offenders in the NWT.

Current Status

- During this time of the COVID-19 pandemic all inmate temporary absences for work or program activity outside the facilities has been suspended. This does not apply to inmates who are applying for a temporary absence or early release back to their community.
- Each offender is informed of his/her right to apply for a temporary absence and all case plans for offenders consider the suitability for temporary absence
- Facility wardens have the delegated authority to approve temporary absences under most circumstances.
- The following criteria identified are considered when deciding whether to grant a temporary absence:
 - a) Public safety
 - b) Inmate risk assessment
 - c) Likelihood of escape or non-compliance
 - d) Inmate security classification

- e) Consideration of victim proximity and safety
- f) Length of sentence served
- Offenders are informed of their right to appeal the denial of a temporary absence application to the Director of Corrections.

Background

- In 2017, the Salt River First Nation and Poundmaker's Lodge Treatment centres collaborated to deliver a six week pilot on-the-land program in Fort Smith. The focus of the program was to provide a safe, secure, community based mobile addictions treatment program with an on-the-land component and with significance placed on Indigenous healing and recovery and the road to abstinence. This was the only delivery of this program in the community of Fort Smith.
- One female offender from the Fort Smith Correctional Complex Female Unit attended the three part treatment programming, each session lasting 2 weeks.
- There were no male offenders at the Fort Smith Correctional Complex Male Unit that met the criteria for a temporary absence from the facility to attend the on-the-land program at that time.

s 16(1)(c) **CORRECTIONS RESPONSE AND RECOVERY** s 16(1)(c)

Issue

s 16(1)(c)

NWT Position

- s 16(1)(c)

Current Status

NWT Corrections During COVID

Corrections began reviewing their pandemic plans and planning for the potential spread of COVID-19 in January 2020.

Reducing Inmates in Custody

- The Department of Justice has been actively exploring options available to reduce the number of inmates within NWT correctional facilities in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This has included investigating opportunities to grant temporary absences for releasing inmates on a case by case and risk assessed basis. As of June 24, 2020 a total of 16 temporary absences have been approved where inmates meet the minimum criteria and have less than 90 days remaining on their sentence.
- Housing is taken into consideration as part of the temporary absence review process. The Corrections Service will not release an individual on a temporary absence without an appropriate housing plan being in place to support their release.

Inmate Care and Wellness

- All inmates entering NWT Correctional facilities are required to be medically screened. Screening procedures have been bolstered due to COVID-19 and include:
 - A COVID-19 specific screening questionnaire
 - Temperature check (as part of regular medical screening)
 - In the event an inmate is symptomatic they are isolated in identified cells within the facilities and COVID-19 testing is arranged in conjunction with health officials. To date all tests for COVID-19 have come back negative, and currently no tests are outstanding.
- Currently there is sufficient capacity within the facilities to allow each inmate their own cell.
- The Department has attempted to keep as many activities and programs running for inmates as safely possible. There has been curtailment and cancellation of some

higher risk activities including personal visits and some programming that is delivered by outside agencies, as well as programming in the community. Program size has been reduced to ensure safe distancing practices are followed. Case management and counselling services also remain in place ensuring proper protocols are followed

- All contractors attending facilities are required to be screened before entry. At this time only essential contractors are permitted. Lawyers and Elder visits are assessed on a case by case basis. Personal visits in emergency circumstances are considered on a case by case basis, and would occur behind glass where available. PPE is utilized in all circumstances.
- The Department has set up the ability for inmates to video conference with family members and friends, recognizing that personal contact with loved ones is very important for healing. Any resumption of services will be done in close consultation with the Office of the Chief Public Health Officer and the Workers' Safety & Compensation Commission (WSCC). Currently there is no timeline as to when in person visits will be re-established.

Staff Safety

- Procedures for staff have evolved over the course of the last few months as recommendations from health officials have changed and developed.
- Currently all persons are screened and have their temperature checked upon entry into the facility for COVID-19 symptoms. Staff who identify as having symptoms upon screening at the facility are requested to return home and contact Public Health.
- The Department continues to monitor risk factors in determining appropriate procedures for staff and inmates in conjunction with health officials.
- Currently NWT correctional facilities are adequately stocked with PPE. This is reviewed on a regular basis.
- As a proactive measure and in consultation with other correctional jurisdictions, the Department has procured a material type mask for staff and inmates to be worn voluntarily which is aligned with the Chief Public Health Officer's advice on reducing transmission of COVID-19. Proper PPE protocols remain in place where required. These masks do not take the place of the use of proper PPE.
- Regular communications are sent out to staff to advise of procedural changes and to ensure safe practices are highlighted. Occupational Health and Safety meetings are held on a monthly basis at all facilities and ensure engagement with committee members on updates specific to COVID-19 practices and protocols.
- The Corrections Service cancelled all staff leave in March 2020 due to Covid-19. Staff leave requests during this time were reviewed on a case by case basis. Staff leave for the summer months has been reinstated in correctional facilities and probation offices. Communication was circulated that leave is subject to operational requirements and may be suspended at any time due to Covid-19.

Facility Operations

- Safety procedures have been put in place to ensure high contact points within the facilities are sanitized several times a day. Cleaning protocols have been bolstered across all facilities.
- All facilities have contingency plans should positive COVID-19 cases occur within the facilities. There are a variety of operational contingencies that can be put into place including:
 - Isolating inmates who are sick in designated areas within the facilities;
 - Closing and/or repurposing the smaller facilities
 - Redeploying facility staff
 - As a last resort and only in the case of severe staff shortages, lock downs would be considered. This would in part be needed for the safety of redeployed staff s 20(1)(e)
 - Inmates who are symptomatic will be locked down and isolated outside the regular living units. Inmates would still be offered daily showers and fresh air with appropriate PPE supplied. The Corrections Service consults with the Office of the Chief Public Health Officer to determine the best courses of action for implementing isolation and maintaining inmate wellbeing.

Community Corrections

- Probation offices across the NWT are having clients report by telephone. Arrangements are flexible as not all clients have telephone services.
- One Staff member in each of the 3 regional offices are in place, maintaining an office presence to ensure responses to court are met without delay.
- Local RCMP detachments have been advised of this change in reporting and Probation Officers continue to liaise with police on any challenges.
- Regional Probation Managers are reviewing reporting requirements on an ongoing basis to ensure compliance with court orders.
- The Corrections Service is currently in the process of returning Probation Officers to community offices. This will only occur after consultation with Public Health and the WSCC. The timing of this will coincide with Courts returning to operation.

Background

- Jurisdictions have developed innovative approaches in responding to COVID-19. Efforts are expanding to consider recovery plans for the corrections system.
- In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, coordination and collaboration between health and justice sectors has been crucial to ensure the health of individuals in custody is protected. Correctional systems have had to update practices and

procedures to align with direction received, including recommendations and orders by public health officials.

- This has included measures within correctional centres to protect the safety and human rights of vulnerable populations and upon release to help keep communities safe.

- s 16(1)(c) [REDACTED]

Conference Documents

- s 16(1)(c) [REDACTED]

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16(1)**CORRECTIONS RESPONSE AND RECOVERY**

s 16(1)(c)

Issue

s 16(1)(c)

NWT Position

- In the NWT the response to COVID has included taking opportunities to reduce the number of inmates in custody through temporary absences on a case by case and risk assessed basis.
- All inmates entering facilities are medically screened by way of questionnaire, temperature check, and isolation if symptomatic. To date all tests have come back negative, and there are no outstanding tests. Currently there is sufficient capacity to allow each inmate their own cell. We have seen a 29% reduction in custody counts in all adult facilities since mid-March.
- Personal visits were cancelled, and Elder and lawyer visits are assessed on a case by case basis. The Department has set up the ability for inmates to video conference with family members and friends. The Department is currently exploring a phased approach to easing visitation restrictions.
- All staff are screened and have their temperature checked upon entering facilities
- Probation offices have had clients reporting by phone with some exceptions.

Current Status**NWT Corrections During COVID**

Corrections began reviewing their pandemic plans and planning for the potential spread of COVID-19 in January 2020.

Reducing Inmates in Custody

- The Department of Justice has been actively exploring options available to reduce the number of inmates within NWT correctional facilities in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This has included investigating opportunities to grant temporary absences for releasing inmates on a case by case and risk assessed basis. As of July 2, 2020, a total of 16 temporary absences have been approved where inmates meet the minimum criteria and have less than 90 days remaining on their sentence.
- Housing is taken into consideration as part of the temporary absence review process. The Corrections Service will not release an individual on a temporary absence without an appropriate housing plan being in place to support their release.

Inmate Care and Wellness

- All inmates entering NWT Correctional facilities are required to be medically screened. Screening procedures have been bolstered due to COVID-19 and include:
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- Currently there is sufficient capacity within the facilities to allow each inmate their own cell.
- The Department has attempted to keep as many activities and programs running for inmates as safely possible. There has been curtailment and cancellation of some higher risk activities including personal visits and some programming that is delivered by outside agencies, as well as programming in the community. Program size has been reduced to ensure safe distancing practices are followed. Case management and counselling services also remain in place ensuring proper protocols are followed
- All contractors attending facilities are required to be screened before entry. At this time only essential contractors are permitted. Lawyers and Elder visits are assessed on a case by case basis. Personal visits in emergency circumstances are considered on a case by case basis, and would occur behind glass where available. PPE is utilized in all circumstances.
- The Department has set up the ability for inmates to video conference with family members and friends, recognizing that personal contact with loved ones is very important for healing. Any resumption of services will be done in close consultation with the Office of the Chief Public Health Officer and the Workers' Safety & Compensation Commission (WSCC).
- The Department is currently exploring options for easing restrictions on visitation in correctional facilities. This would be done with a "phased approach" starting with approved family visitors with current screening procedures in place. This process will begin the week of July 6, 2020, in close consultation with the Office of the Chief Public Health Officer and the Workers' Safety & Compensation Commission (WSCC).

Staff Safety

- Procedures for staff have evolved over the course of the last few months as recommendations from health officials have changed and developed.
- Currently all persons are screened and have their temperature checked upon entry into the facility for COVID-19 symptoms. Staff who identify as having symptoms

upon screening at the facility are requested to return home and contact Public Health.

- The Department continues to monitor risk factors in determining appropriate procedures for staff and inmates in conjunction with health officials.
- Currently NWT correctional facilities are adequately stocked with PPE. This is reviewed on a regular basis.
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- The Corrections Service cancelled all staff leave in March 2020 due to Covid-19. Staff leave requests during this time were reviewed on a case by case basis. Staff leave for the summer months has been reinstated in correctional facilities and probation offices. Communication was circulated that leave is subject to operational requirements and may be suspended at any time due to Covid-19.

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- Safety procedures have been put in place to ensure high contact points within the facilities are sanitized several times a day. Cleaning protocols have been bolstered across all facilities.
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Community Corrections

- Probation offices across the NWT are having clients report by telephone. Arrangements are flexible as not all clients have telephone services.
- One Staff member in each of the 3 regional offices are in place, maintaining an office presence to ensure responses to court are met without delay.
- Local RCMP detachments have been advised of this change in reporting and Probation Officers continue to liaise with police on any challenges.
- Regional Probation Managers are reviewing reporting requirements on an ongoing basis to ensure compliance with court orders.
- The Corrections Service is currently in the process of returning Probation Officers to community offices. This will only occur after consultation with Public Health and the WSCC. It is anticipated that Probation Officers will return to community offices the week of July 13, 2020.

Background

- Jurisdictions have developed innovative approaches in responding to COVID-19. Efforts are expanding to consider recovery plans for the corrections system.
- In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, coordination and collaboration between health and justice sectors has been crucial to ensure the health of individuals in custody is protected. Correctional systems have had to update practices and procedures to align with direction received, including recommendations and orders by public health officials.
- This has included measures within correctional centres to protect the safety and human rights of vulnerable populations and upon release to help keep communities safe.

- s 16(1)(c)

Conference Documents

- s 16(1)(c)

CORRECTIONS PROGRAMS

Issue

The Minister may receive questions about correctional programming that is currently available in NWT correctional facilities and in community probation offices.

Key Messages

- The Department of Justice recognizes that to make a difference, corrections programming must address the root causes that lead an individual to crime. This is essential for successful offender rehabilitation and reintegration into their communities.
- All corrections programs support participants to become aware of the triggers that lead them to engage in unhealthy and unsafe behaviours. Information and tools are presented to support a change in participants' thoughts, values and behaviours in daily life – and thus reduce the risk they present to themselves and others.
- Corrections programs integrate Indigenous culture and traditions in the way they are delivered with the input of Elders, Traditional Liaison Officers and other Indigenous staff.
- Remanded inmates can access, on a voluntary basis, the same programs that are offered to sentenced inmates. Corrections continuously looks for opportunities to increase offender participation in programming. Remanded inmates frequently attend Court; therefore their voluntary participation in programs is hard to anticipate.

Current Status

- The Department continues to research, redesign and roll out programs that better address the large percentage of Indigenous offenders, respond to prevalent issues requiring intervention, and that take into account the average length of stay in custody. Through ongoing reviews, programs are revised as needed and staff are trained to deliver the modified programs.
- Program delivery schedules across Corrections are updated on a quarterly basis, based on the needs of the clients under supervision at that time.
 - Correctional Facilities: The Department has attempted to keep as many activities and programs running for inmates as safely possible during COVID-19. Suspensions to some higher risk activities including personal visits and some programming that is delivered by outside agencies, were lifted on July 08, 2020, recognizing the current COVID-19 situation within the NWT. Personal visitations for immediate family resumed and outside agencies were also permitted back into the facilities with the proper screening precautions being implemented to mitigate any potential risks. Programming in the community was also re-instated. Program size has been reduced to ensure safe distancing practices are followed. Case

management and counselling services at correctional facilities also remain in place ensuring proper protocols are followed.

- Probation Offices: Due to Covid-19, Probation Officers were ordered home to work remotely on March 19, 2020. As a result, all regularly delivered programming was suspended. Probation Services returned physically to their office spaces on July 14, 2020 and a resumption of program services will be done in close consultation with the Office of the Chief Public Health Officer.
- Community-based programs are used to facilitate inmate reintegration. In this way, inmates learn about, and are equipped to deal with, the day-to-day requirements of life outside of the facility. Such programs are an important part of release planning for all inmates.

Correctional Programs

- The Department delivers evidenced based core programs that target the most common factors that can lead an offender to crime ('criminogenic needs') and are designed to help inmates with shorter sentences, as well as those serving their sentence in the community. These programs are offered at all correctional facilities and regional probation offices:
 - *'Substance Abuse Management'* (or SAM) program – offered since 2016, to address addictions related needs of both male and female offenders;
 - *'Living Without Violence'* program – offered since 2017, to address the needs of male offenders with violence related offences;
 - *'Respectful Relationships'* program – offered since 2017, to address the needs of male offenders with domestic violence offences; and
 - *'Thinking Leads to Change'* program – implemented in November 2019, to address the criminal attitudes and behaviours of female offenders.
- The new *'Change Management Maintenance'* program aims to consolidate self-knowledge and personal change that offenders gained from participation in core programming. Change Management is being piloted in two facilities (NSCC and FSCC) and in the Yellowknife probation office.
- For sex offenders serving territorial sentences at the NSCC: a modified program is used that is more targeted to the relatively short average sentence length for, and needs of, this population in the NWT. The program runs for 9 weeks.
- The Correctional Service of Canada determines the risk level and programming needs of federal offenders. If required, NWT offenders serving federal sentences are transferred to federal institutions to complete necessary programming not offered in the NWT. As per the agreement between the GNWT and CSC, these NWT offenders may return to the NWT to serve the remainder of their sentences, once their programming needs identified by CSC have been met.

Meeting the specific needs of Indigenous offenders

All NWT correctional facilities

- Statistics indicate that the majority of inmates and youth in custody in the NWT are Indigenous. In 2019-20, the average percentage of males who were Indigenous was 81% and females who were indigenous was 73% (excludes Nunavut Offenders). In addition to substance abuse identified as the prevalent issue for all inmates in the NWT, many Indigenous inmates must contend with additional factors such as the limited employment opportunities in some small communities and the trauma, often intergenerational, associated with the legacy of residential schools.
- All NWT correctional facilities incorporate Indigenous cultures and traditions into programming and involve Elders in the sharing of traditional knowledge, and the provision of traditional counselling and support services to inmates. Where possible, in-house traditional facilities are used and inmates, youth and adults, may be taken out on the land to engage in traditional activities.

North Slave Correctional Complex (NSCC)

- The NSCC offers the services of a Traditional Counsellor and Liaison Officer. Due to the incumbent's availability this position is a three quarter time position providing traditional counseling and programming services to inmates at the complex. Inmates may self refer or sign up to see the counsellor or they may be referred by their case manager. The NSCC traditional counsellor brings a wealth of knowledge and experience, focusing on Indigenous trauma and healing practices. He provides both individual counseling services to inmates at the facility and also in a group setting. He has facilitated a number of sharing circles, to which several inmates have signed up with positive feedback from the inmates.

The NSCC has four traditional areas for the delivery of programs to inmates and youth by a traditional counsellor: two areas are located inside the facility (respectively one each in the adult and in the separate youth unit). The other two are located outdoors, within the secure perimeter. These areas are used for smudging, one-on-one counselling and sharing circles.

South Mackenzie Correctional Centre (SMCC) – innovative programs and approaches

- The SMCC has been leading the way on the development of Northern Sessions, developed to address the specific background and needs of NWT Indigenous inmates. Since March 2019, Northern Sessions on addictions have been delivered that harmonize with the core criminogenic Substance Abuse Management (SAM) program. Delivery materials for the Northern Sessions on violence were finalized in December 2019. SMCC will begin using these materials during the delivery of the core criminogenic Respectful Relationships and Living Without Violence programs. It is envisioned that this program model will eventually extend to NSCC and FSCC.
- The SMCC offers a wraparound approach: a made-in the NWT Indigenous Pre-Treatment Healing program prepares offenders to begin their healing journey and to engage in more structured core correctional programming. The Red Road to Freedom program is also delivered at the SMCC to help prepare offenders for their reintegration back into their communities. Both programs are delivered with the

participation of Elders and rooted in NWT Indigenous traditions, spirituality and worldview. Work is currently underway on the development of a curriculum for the Pre-Treatment Healing Program to be expanded to other correctional facilities.

- It is envisioned that the Indigenous Pre-Treatment Healing Program will become the cornerstone of the Therapeutic Community model to be implemented at the SMCC. (*For more information see BN 40. SMCC as a Therapeutic Community.*)

Education, vocational training and life skills programs

Academics

- The Corrections Service assists youth in custody to achieve high school graduation. The Corrections Service also assists adults in custody with their educational goals.
- An analysis of the adult population at the NSCC indicated that the average education level for incarcerated inmates at the Adult Unit is at around a grade six level, which reflects the situation of inmates across NWT corrections.
- Adult offenders can participate in educational programming at the NSCC Adult Unit and at the FSCC (provided by institutional instructors) and at the SMCC (provided by a contracted literacy instructor).
- The NSCC Young Offender Unit has a non-monetary contract with Yellowknife Education District No.1 (YK1) for the delivery of education to youth in custody. Two full time high school teachers teach classes as per the YK1 schedule - one posted in the open custody classroom, and one posted in the secure custody classroom. The teachers collectively teach all grades to the young offenders in custody.
- All facilities maintain a close working relationship with local high schools and colleges. Inmates may access distance learning with the assistance of the institutional instructors. In addition, inmates who are eligible for temporary absence from the facility may attend education programs in the community.

Additional supports

- For youth, NSCC Youth Unit staff facilitate life skills sessions.
- For adults, both NSCC and FSCC offer the '*Foundations For Success*' program, which is designed to assist inmates with some of the challenges that adult learners face when they return to school. Plans are in place to also roll out the delivery of this program at the SMCC.
- Since 2017, the NSCC offers Mental Health First Aid training to inmates.
- The SMCC offers various vocational programs and training opportunities, such as Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS), Food Safe Level 1, First Aid/CPR and Safe Equipment Operation.

Background

- Substance abuse is the most prevalent issue requiring intervention, especially for offenders assessed at high risk to re-offend. Family violence and sexual offences

have also been identified as issues for NWT offenders.

- Dedicated corrections staff provide case management and programming services to assess and support the needs of inmates:
 - 11 staff at the North Slave Correctional Complex
 - 6 staff at the South Mackenzie Correctional Centre; and
 - 5 staff at the Fort Smith Correctional Complex.
- In addition to programs offered in correctional facilities, counsellors and psychologists are available to provide therapeutic services, where this is identified in an offenders' case plan. (*For more information see BN 36. Corrections Counselling and Psychological Services.*)
- As part of the release planning process, case managers look at options in the community, where available, for inmates to be able to continue attending programming similar to what they started while in custody.

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS: CORRECTIONS COUNSELLING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

Issue

The Corrections Service is responsible for the care of inmates during their incarceration. This includes offenders with mental health concerns or diagnosed illnesses.

Key Messages

- I know that many offenders have experienced trauma themselves and may have mental health or cognitive difficulties as a result.
- Mental health and counselling services are provided at all correctional facilities using a screening, assessment and referral process that is supportive of a continuum of care model. Services are delivered by psychologists, counsellors, traditional liaison officers, community volunteer organizations and agencies, Elders, and medical staff.
- In addition, correctional facilities offer evidence-based programming that address common factors that lead an offender to crime. Programs are delivered using a culturally appropriate lens and integrate Indigenous culture and traditions.
- The Department of Justice continues to work with the Department of Health and Social Services and local and regional providers on the continuity of mental health and addictions services for offenders.
- Counselling supports and psychology services continue to be offered to inmates during the COVID-19 pandemic. Elders visits to all facilities are available on a case by case basis for humanitarian and compassionate reasons during this time, and although AA and NA sessions will not be available in the community, in-facility sessions will be made available where possible.

Current Status

- Inmates in NWT correctional facilities who are unable to participate in criminogenic programming due to cognitive limitations may be considered for an alternative individual program on a case by case basis.
- Two mental health screening tools are used, one for men and one for women, as well as suicide screening tools for adults and youth to assist with referrals and the application of services for those in need.
- Corrections psychologists deliver expert clinical services and counselling supports to inmates. These services are available to inmates in facilities and to probation clients on an as needed basis.
- Counselling and psychological services are available as follows:
 - There are two dedicated psychologist positions at the North Slave Correctional Complex (NSCC). Two previous competitions have been

advertised and no successful candidates have been identified. As this is a hard to fill position at the NSCC a counsellor has been hired from May 11, 2020 to May 28, 2021 to provide services to both adult and youth at the NSCC on a daily basis. The Corrections Service is exploring options for filling the second position, including a mentorship program under a registered psychologist in the NWT to complete appropriate hours. This process has been used in the past to fill psychologist positions.

- One psychologist in Hay River provides services to the South Mackenzie Correctional Centre (SMCC), Fort Smith Correctional Complex (FSCC) and South Slave Regional Community Corrections office.
- The FSCC fulltime counsellor provides counselling services to the male and female inmates at the complex and to community clients as referred through the Fort Smith Community Corrections office.
- Corrections traditional and addictions counsellors help identify inmates' specific needs and work with case managers to ensure appropriate supports are made available. Traditional counsellors are employed at the SMCC and at the NSCC.
- Facilities involve Elders and volunteer services to provide traditional spiritual support, non-denominational faith based counselling, and supports to residential school survivors. Elders visit all facilities (for youth and adults).
- All facilities support Alcoholics and Narcotics Anonymous groups and sessions. Some of these are led by community volunteers, while others are organized and led by the inmates themselves.
- Corrections' staff working in facilities and probation offices receive training in Mental Health First Aid. This training helps staff recognize the signs and symptoms of common mental health problems, provide assistance and make referrals to ensure concerns are addressed with health professionals.
- Mental Health First Aid training is also being offered to inmates at the NSCC.
- Corrections staff have participated in a number of training sessions on trauma informed care since 2018 in Yellowknife and in Fort Smith provided by experts in the field. This training will continue within Corrections and is now part of the entry level training for new correctional officers.

Background

- Inmate mental health had been raised as an issue by the Office of the Auditor General in its 2015 audit report of NWT Corrections. Out of 14 recommendations made, one pertained to mental health.
- Our NWT Correctional facilities provide direct supervision of inmates as a key method to facilitate holistic healing in a safe, secure environment. Supports and services are available for inmates in the areas of education, training and counselling as well as for culturally appropriate spiritual support.

NEW CORRECTIONS ACT IMPLEMENTATION

Issue

MLAs may have questions about plans to implement the NWT *Corrections Act*.

Key Messages

- There have been significant philosophical changes in the field of corrections since the 1980s, when the priority was the good governance of the facility. Now the emphasis is placed on the rehabilitation of the offender. This is reflected in the renewed *Corrections Act* for the NWT, which received assent in August 2019.
- Significant work in the areas of policy development, directives and training will be completed to ensure that changes in the legislation are accurately reflected in implementation and associated training for staff.
- In particular, the Corrections Northern Recruitment Training Program, from which the Department hires most new Corrections officers, is in the process of being revamped to reflect the new approach and thus strengthen recruitment.
- It is currently anticipated that the new *Corrections Act* will be in force by spring/summer of 2021.

Current Status

- Implementation dates for the new *Corrections Act* have been delayed due to COVID-19. Legislative resources were required to be re-deployed to focus on areas related to COVID-19, and this has caused a delay in the completion of Corrections Service Regulations. Other key areas of implementation such as training, policy and operating procedures fall in line with the completion of the Regulations.
- Implementation of the new *Corrections Act* involves the development of Corrections Service Regulations, along with significant policy, operating procedures and detailed training curriculums. Due to the amount of elements involved in this process the Department will be staggering the implementation of key areas of the *Corrections Act* over the next fiscal year with full implementation anticipated in the spring/summer of 2021.
- The development of Corrections Service Regulations is expected to be completed by the fall of 2020.
- As the Corrections Service Regulations, policy directives, operating guidelines and training curriculums are developed, training will be scheduled and facilitated which will be closely followed by the implementation of new operating processes and policy requirements in that key area.
- Key areas have been scheduled for staggered implementation as follows:
 - Establishment of the Investigation and Standards Office;
 - Implementation of Independent Adjudicators;
 - Separate Confinement and Disciplinary Segregation;

- Community Advisory Boards;
 - Staff Code of Conduct; and
 - Search and Seizure Process.
- The implementation schedule may be modified pending the processes for staffing of the Investigation and Standards Office, organization of the Adjudication process and the availability of contracted training providers. All other areas of the *Act* are included in the ongoing work being done to support full implementation.
 - The new *Corrections Act* is structured in such a way to be less prescriptive in legislation for some areas to allow for greater flexibility in adapting and implementing evolving best practice in Corrections through the regulations. This structure is similar to the approach followed by other jurisdictions.

Background

- The Department completed a review of the NWT *Corrections Act*, and concluded that it should be repealed and replaced.
- The Department conducted stakeholder engagements with Corrections frontline staff and external stakeholders including civil society, the legal community in the NWT and Indigenous Governments.
- A “What we Heard” report outlines the feedback received and informed the ensuing legislative proposal.
- In addition to recognizing issues unique to the NWT, Bill 45 considered corrections “best practices” in Canada and internationally, in particular the United Nations’ “Mandela Rules”.
- The NWT Corrections Service currently applies governance and policies consistent with the Mandela Rules in the areas of:
 - Admission and discharge;
 - Inmate classification;
 - Conditions of confinement;
 - Discipline and sanctions;
 - Contact and visitation;
 - Access to day-to-day activities and programming;
 - Availability of health care services; and
 - Standards, inspections and investigations.
- The Department proposes to legislate current policies and Directives and introduce new practices which are consistent with the Mandela Rules in key areas such as:
 - Segregation and conditions of confinement;
 - Independent adjudication and investigations;
 - Investigation Standards Office;
 - Partnerships with Indigenous Governments;
 - Community Advisory Boards; and
 - Professional standards.

United Nations Mandela Rules

- The revised UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Mandela Rules) were adopted unanimously in December 2015 by the UN General Assembly and set out the minimum standards for good prison management, including ensuring that the rights of prisoners are respected.
- The Mandela Rules are not entirely new, but are an updated version of the 1955 Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (SMRs). The Rules were revised in eight substantive areas to reflect standards that have emerged in correctional science and human rights since 1955.
- The 122 Rules cover all aspects of prison management and outline the agreed minimum standards for the treatment of prisoners, whether remanded or convicted. The Rules include the following basic principles:
 - Prisoners must be treated with respect for their inherent dignity and value as human beings.
 - Torture or other ill-treatment is prohibited.
 - Prisoners should be treated according to their needs, without discrimination.
 - The purpose of prison is to protect society and reduce reoffending.
 - The safety of prisoners, staff, service providers and visitors at all times is paramount.

CORRECTIONS DIVISION – HUMAN RESOURCES

Issue

The Minister may receive questions on supports, training and resources available to staff within the Corrections Service.

Key Messages

- The Department of Justice understands the importance of employee mental health and wellness and providing staff with appropriate training, tools and supports to carry out their duties effectively.
- An inter-departmental working group has been formed with officials from the Departments of Justice and Finance to identify issues and develop a workplan to address: training requirements; appropriate tools and resources for employee mental health and wellness; and recruitment and retention within the NWT Corrections Service.
- Management within the Corrections Service works closely with GNWT Human Resources in relation to ongoing training and supports available to GNWT employees and how they can be modified and delivered in a correctional context.
- Staff experiencing personal problems or requiring support are encouraged to access the Employee and Family Assistance Program available to GNWT employees. Following all serious incidents within Corrections there is an immediate shift briefing of those officers involved and critical incident stress debriefings are available (if required) with trained facilitators.

Current Status

- The Interdepartmental working group met on February 7, 2020. The next meeting will be scheduled in mid to late June, 2020 due to COVID-19, as next steps require the scheduling of training for Corrections staff.
- The Heads of Corrections FPT has recently created a working group on Employee Wellness and Recruitment & Retention as jurisdictions have seen increases in work related injuries, predominantly psychological injuries. All jurisdictions have also experienced challenges around recruitment and retention in Corrections. The NWT Corrections Service will have representation on this working group.

Staff Training

- The Corrections Services is in the process of formulating a comprehensive training plan and calendar to ensure training activities delivered in a efficient manner taking into consideration the operational realities of a 24/7 operation.
- In service training in Mental Health First Aid, and Compassion Fatigue is currently offered to current corrections staff, and to staff through the CNRTP.
- The Corrections Service is currently working with Ontario Corrections on wellness

training for front line staff and supervisors/managers. Training will begin to roll out in 2020-21.

- Training on de-escalation techniques, violence prevention and Peace Officer responsibilities is provided to staff on an ongoing basis. This training is also delivered to new recruits through the CNRTP.
- Supervisor training on leading in crisis situations, leadership roles and development was held at the NSCC in January 2020. This was attended by Deputy Wardens, Assistant Wardens and the Warden at the NSCC.
- The Corrections Service will be developing a leadership course for supervisor/managers to be delivered in fall/winter 2020-21. The existing course needs to be revamped incorporating changes in the *Corrections Act* and best practices in the field of Corrections.
- Corrections is currently in the process of revamping the Corrections Recruitment Training Program (CNRTP) recognizing the new *Corrections Act* and best practices in the field of Corrections.

Background – CONFIDENTIAL TO THE MINISTER

- A staff member at the NSCC has brought forward concerns around staffing, management, and leadership within Corrections.