

LABOUR RELATIONS REACH AN ALL-TIME LOW AT THE NLMC TABLE

Prison Needle Exchange Program (PNEP)

The Commissioner testified in the Public Safety Committee that she had talked to the Unions about the Prison Needle exchange program in advance of its implementation. We made sure we clarified the difference between talk to and consult on this issue. CSC did not consult with us on this program. Instead, they informed of what they would do and when, in May 2018, after we repeatedly asked them to talk with us in advance before implementing such a program that will have an impact on Correctional Officers and, in our view, public safety.

The Commissioner stated that the program was a CSC initiative keeping in line with the governments harm reduction strategy. Whom are we to believe? We demanded the Commissioner put a stop to unrolling this program in January 2019 until we have had time to evaluate the two sites on the program and we do proper consultation. We also took the time point out to the Commissioner that contrary to what they have tried to tell us, countries in Europe, namely Switzerland & France, don't give out unlimited needles to inmates. Here is what we pointed out:

- **Inmates in Switzerland who have access to the program are not serving life sentences, but rather they are in institutions comparable to provincial ones where sentences are less than 2 years (so they are on their best behaviour & closer linked to community programs as well as sooner release)—there is also no minimum, medium or maximum classification of these offenders.**
- **The inmate culture is different;** there is little or no organized crime or street gangs.
- **Only 13 out of 117 institutions have a needle exchange program subject to the discretion of the Warden and buy-in from all the different employee groups (unions) and health care.**
- **They do not allow any needle exchange programs in treatment centres to ensure drug use is not detrimental to their mental health treatment.**
- Nurses are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- The warden **in Switzerland** has the authorization to segregate inmates for **10 days** after an assault or non-compliance with the program.
- **In France the Unions mobilized and the government backed off the notion of a needle exchange program.**
- **In France they came to an agreement that no needles would be given to inmates in their cell. Instead there is a supervised injection site under the sole responsibility of health care, so Correctional Officers are not in any way responsible for a needle exchange program.**
- **Finally, we pointed out the obvious, that the two prison cultures are completely different.**

Other issues we pointed out:

- **The role of Correctional Officers is now very confusing given our zero tolerance on drug policy.**
- **That rates of infectious diseases are declining in our facilities because of the numerous harm reduction strategies we already have in place.**
- **What's the plan when a needle goes missing?**
- **Why is an inmate on the program not into consideration for when they appear in front of the parole board?**
- **We still have no protective, needle-resistant gloves.**

After a heated exchange, the commissioner agreed to let us know the following week on whether or not to agree with delaying the program in January and to sit down and consult with us. We still do not have an answer.



National Labour Management Update Fall 2018

Handcuffing from Behind — We discussed the unprovoked and unpredictable attack on an exceptional Correctional Officer at Millhaven which resulted in the officer losing 2 teeth and his cheek slashed through. Once again, the inmate was not handcuffed. We are absolutely convinced that cuffing from behind would prevent these serious attacks that happen time and time again. CSC said they would discuss it with us but would not agree to a blanket policy. This is a no brainer for us, it is safety and security 101, CSC has the power to change this practice and should immediately. We will do what we need to change this practice despite CSC's incomprehensible reluctance to this basic safety and security practice.

3-way Shift Exchanges—After reaching agreement with the former Commissioner to program SDS and move forward with 3-way shift exchanges CSC informed us that there was never any agreement on this matter. A quick reach out to the former Commissioner confirmed that we had indeed agreed to move forward on this.

DDH (Detector Dog Handler Schedules)—CSC back peddled on an agreement (bulletin sent out) to move forward with variable hour schedules for Dog Handlers. We once again attempted to clarify this confusion with CSC and suggested that inference to move forward on the file was also coming from regional and local managers. We demanded the employer follows Appendix K of the collective agreement. After the meeting, it was confirmed to us that CSC will respect its original direction and move forward on this. We shall see. The union recommends working with your local joint schedule committee to establish a new schedule.

Deployment issues (Global agreement) — We gave another example of no consultation occurring in the Atlantic region on the issue of deployments being respected before CTP recruits, as clearly outlined in the global agreement. This lack of consultation in the region has resulted in pressure on other regions. We suggested CSC get back to the fundamental principles of what we agreed to at the global agreement table to sit and consult with the regional presidents on deployments to avoid complaints being filed. CSC will come back to us on this issue.

Transgender Inmates—While we continue to work with an interim policy and wait to be consulted on a policy about transgender inmates resulting from Bill C-16 we asked that CSC avoid doing what they did in the Pacific region (Mission) by blanket ordering several female staff who were uncomfortable to search an inmate with male genitalia. We reminded them of our agreement discussed at labour management meeting at NHQ to several months ago to avoid this type of direction and seek other alternatives, if possible. CSC agreed to resend direction to the region and agreed to remove any formal discipline against these officers at the site.

Excessive overtime & staff shortages—We warned CSC about the excessive amount of overtime occurring at some sites, in particular, at the WOS (Women's offender sector). We asked that CSC pay close attention to this crisis and take action. CSC explained that there are several CTP's going through this year with some of those recruits going as Primary Workers to women's facilities. CSC also informed us that that they have a recruitment problem. We were not surprised to hear that given the climate in which we are working (i.e. diminished use of segregation, Hines cases, etc.).

We discussed several other topics including (but not limited to); implementation of the IODL decision & 200 hours sick leave, the never-ending Phoenix issues, National Grievance committee project, excessive and lengthy investigations, SDS access for local Unions, many issues with the family link program, rounds and counts committee, gun cages in new maximum security units and OMS access to inmate incompatibles. Some are moving forward and others continue at a snail's pace.

It is clear that the meaning of consultation has changed drastically at NHQ since February 2018. We will need to see if CSC continues down this path or embarks on real consultation on the real issues affecting Correctional Officers.

Your National Executive Committee