

**PRISON
NEEDLE
EXCHANGE
PROGRAM**

**UCCO-SACC-CSN
FIGHT
ON**





WORD FROM THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT

JEFF WILKINS

Last year, the Correctional Service of Canada, in response to a lawsuit filed in September 2012, implemented the Prison Needle Exchange Program (PNEP). The lawsuit did not ask for a monetary settlement, but instead demanded a rare ruling that would give the judge discretionary power to implement a needle exchange program inside our institutions.

With the implementation of the PNEP last year, Correctional Service Canada asked for a stay of decision from the judge, citing that it was implementing a program similar to that being requested in the lawsuit. This program, for which Corrections Canada failed to properly consult with UCCO-SACC-CSN, was first implemented in two institutions, Atlantic Institution in Renous, New Brunswick, and Grand Valley Institution for Women in Kitchener, Ontario. UCCO-SACC-CSN has since been actively mobilizing against this program, as it has a direct impact on the health and safety of our members and is being operationalized by correctional officers. The actions that the members of UCCO-SACC-CSN have taken are listed in this document.

The program does nothing to fulfill its purpose—to reduce harm and the spread of infectious disease. In Atlantic Institution, our members have seized “authorized” needles from cells in which they did not belong. Throughout our mobilization efforts, UCCO-SACC-CSN has maintained that harm reduction initiatives in any form should be dealt with by health care professionals, not correctional officers.

Given many recent court decisions that have changed the way in which the Correctional Service of Canada functions, as well as the roles and responsibilities of our members, there is a genuine fear that if this case is ruled

on by the courts, needles will become commonplace in our institutions. Collectively, through our mobilization efforts, we have had significant influence with our employer and the federal government; however, we do not have influence on court decisions. For UCCO-SACC-CSN, it is unacceptable for inmates to possess needles, and we will continue to fight this matter. Corrections Canada has heard our arguments, as has the Government of Canada.

As of the beginning of May, the government announced an exemption to obtain the licence required for overdose prevention sites. While UCCO-SACC-CSN does not condone such a program, which would require inmates to visit health care services and, under the supervision of health care staff, inject their substances, we need to put things into perspective and analyze this as a potential solution that eliminates the immediate risk for our members. However, this type of program leads to various issues for our members, in particular, having to turn a “blind eye” to drug use in our institutions. UCCO-SACC-CSN will continue to analyze this program once it is implemented to ensure the health and safety of our members.



HIGHLIGHTS OF A LONG BATTLE

APRIL 2018

The employer informs us of the pressure that CSC is under to implement a prison needle exchange program. It also mentions that it will send us the documentation.

MAY 2018

We still have not received anything from the employer. We give the CSN labour relations service the mandate to obtain information.

The employer advises us it is going ahead with the Prison Needle Exchange Program (PNEP).

JUNE 2018

Presentation of the CSN research service report containing an overview of the situation in countries that have a PNEP.



Protest against the PNEP in front of Grand Valley Institution for Women.



Demonstration in front of Minister of Health Ginette Petitpas Taylor's office.

AUGUST 2018



A delegation of 4 people is sent to Switzerland and France, at the expense of the CSN, to obtain all the information about on-site needle exchange programs, in anticipation of the September National Labour-Management consultation meeting.

SEPTEMBER 2018

Presentation of the report of the Swiss and French situations by the delegation to the National Executive Committee.

Anne Kelley and Fraser Macaulay are absent from the National Labour-Management consultation meeting. The National Executive Committee decides to carry over the presentation of the report to October 4.



Meeting with Senator Larry Smith's deputy and Conservative MP Harold Albrecht.

Liberal MP Francis Drouin, Conservative MP Jim Egliniski, and Conservative MP Pierre Paul-Hus's team are also met with.



Protest against the PNEP in Saskatoon at the Liberal Caucus meeting.

OCTOBER 2018

We inform the employer of the conclusions of our visit to Europe and we requested that a committee be formed with the following union representatives: Jason Godin, Éric Thibault, Frédéric Lebeau and François Enault. At this meeting, the request to set up such a committee is not favourably received.



Meeting with New Democrat MP Matthew Dubé.



Meeting with MP Alexandre Boulerville, from the NDP.



Meeting with Conservative MP Ted Falk.



Meeting with Conservative MP Mark Strahl.

NOVEMBER 2018



Meeting with Liberal MP Marwan Tabbara.



Meeting with Green Party Leader Elizabeth May.



Meeting with Conservative MP Candice Bergen.

Meetings are also held with Conservative MP Dane Lloyd. MPs Bob Bratina and Michel Picard of the Liberal Party and Senator Frances Lankin are also met with, as well as Andrew Scheer's assistant.

The employer agrees to form a committee to discuss the PNEP.



Meeting with Ralph Goodale, federal Minister of Public Safety.



Meeting with Liberal MP Pam Damoff. Senator David Richards is also met with.

First PNEP Committee meeting.



National protest against the PNEP at the office of Minister of Health Ginette Petitpas Taylor in Moncton and at the office of Minister of Public Safety Ralph Goodale in Regina.



DECEMBER 2018

Second meeting of the PNEP Committee. The employer tells us it is ready to examine the introduction of a supervised needle injection site in an institution.



Meeting with Liberal MP Pat Finnigan and Conservative MP Kelly Block.



Public awareness event in Miramichi, NB, with signing of petitions and distribution of information leaflets.

Visit of a supervised needle injection site with the employer in Ottawa.

JANUARY 2019

The employer announces that it has initiated proceedings to obtain a licence to launch a supervised needle injection site at Drumheller Institution.



Jason Godin and members of the Executive Committee meet with Justin Trudeau, who speaks about the PNEP.

MARCH 2019

PNEP Committee Meeting with the employer and the Local Drumheller Executive Committee.



An Atlantic team surprises Ginette Petitpas Taylor, Minister of Health, to demand that she meet with our National President to discuss the PNEP and the health and safety issues that flow from it.



Public awareness event in Kitchener, ON, with petitions signed and information leaflets distributed.



Public awareness activity in Truro, NS, with petitions signed and information leaflets distributed.



Meeting with Bloc Québécois MP Gabriel Sainte-Marie.



Presentation by Jason Godin to the Senate Committee on Human Rights, where he speaks about the PNEP.

APRIL 2019

Meeting with Minister Petitpas Taylor's team.



Public awareness activity in Joliette, QC, with distribution of information leaflets.



Protest in Truro, NS, in front of the offices of Liberal MP Bill Casey and meeting with the MP.



Meeting with Conservative MP Ed Fast and Liberal MP Bill Casey.



Filing of a petition and occupation of the office of the Minister of Justice David Lametti in Montreal.

MAY 2019

Sending of a letter to the Standing Committee on Health.



Grand Valley Institution correctional officers protest at MP Marwan Tabbara's offices in Kitchener, ON



Outreach activity by members of Edmonton Institution for Women.



Meeting with Conservative MP Kelly McCauley.

JUNE 2019



National PNEP demonstration in the streets of Ottawa.



Meeting with Ginette Petitpas Taylor.

The battle on PNEP is far from being over. UCCO-SACC-CSN will not give up.

Media coverage

The Prison Needle Exchange Program has been the subject of several leaflets and dozens of posts on our social networks. Members of the National Executive Committee have provided nearly 30 interviews in several major media outlets, including television, radio, and newspapers. To view the press review, visit our website at ucco-sacc-csn.ca.

