

Inmates Will Be Provided With Needles at the Expense of Prison Staff Safety

Belleville, February 13, 2020 — Once again, the Union of Canadian Correctional Officers (UCCO-SACC-CSN) is denouncing Correctional Service Canada (CSC) and its decision to implement the Prison Needle Exchange Program (PNEP). This time, the program will be launched at Warkworth Institution by mid-February

Through the program, federal inmates will be allowed to have their own needle in their cell to inject contraband intravenous drugs. According to CSC, the goal is to limit the spread of infectious diseases. However, UCCO-SACC-CSN is convinced the PNEP puts correctional officers and front-line staff at greater risk. “We, as federal correctional officers, are opposed to this program because needles circulating freely in institutions puts our own health and safety at risk,” explained Rob Finucan, Ontario regional president at UCCO-SACC-CSN.

Overdose Prevention Sites

Correctional Service Canada has chosen to implement the Prison Needle Exchange Program when there is a safer, more effective option available: overdose prevention sites (OPS) inside our institutions. OPS are overseen by health care professionals who are properly trained to assess individuals injecting illegal drugs. An overdose prevention site is being run safely at Drumheller Institution in Alberta and there have been no missing needles or problems regarding an increased risk to staff.

“We don’t understand why CSC has chosen to ignore the OPS alternative. Moreover, Warkworth Institution has the exact same infrastructure as Drumheller. If an OPS can be put in place at Drumheller, there is no reasonable argument not to do the same at Warkworth,” noted Finucan. Once again, CSC has refused to listen to all front-line staff regarding their safety and has chosen to put a dollar value on the safety of first responders.”

Call Your MP

UCCO-SACC-CSN is asking Ontario residents to call their local MP to demand that safety be at the forefront for first responders in our penitentiaries. “They must put pressure so CSC removes the unsafe and problematic Prison Needle Exchange Program and replaces it with overdose prevention sites overseen by health care professionals,” concluded Finucan.

Action at Quinte Mall tonight

Correctional officers will gather from 6- 8 pm tonight in front of the Quinte Mall in Belleville to inform residents of CSC’s decision.

About the union

The Union of Canadian Correctional Officers (UCCO-SACC-CSN) represents more than 7,400 members across Canada's five major regions: Pacific, Prairies, Ontario, Québec and Atlantic. UCCO-SACC-CSN represents correctional officers in 49 federal institutions.

Information

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