

PRESS RELEASE

Vaccination in federal penitentiaries

The Union of Canadian Correctional Officers concerned with the vaccination plan of the Correctional Service of Canada.

(Montreal, January 6, 2021) — The Union of Canadian Correctional Officers (UCCO-SACC-CSN) has many questions that remain unanswered, as the vaccination operation is due to start on this coming Friday across the federal penitentiaries.

Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) has sent some 1200 doses to various federal prisons and plans to vaccinate the elderly inmates at first. “We don’t have many details on what’s going to come next. Will the Correctional Officers be vaccinated before any of the general population of inmates who are under 70 years of age? Will the vaccination take place in the workplace? Will CSC prioritize vaccinations where there are outbreaks?” asks Jeff Wilkins, National President of the Union of Canadian Correctional Officers-CSN.

Vaccinate Correctional Officers as soon as Possible

UCCO-SACC-CSN demands that correctional officers be vaccinated at their workplace as quickly as possible. “We are disappointed that CSC did not consult with the union. They essentially made the plan and conveyed the plan”, explains Wilkins. Though CSC has a legal mandate to provide care, custody and control to the inmate population they also have the legal mandate to protect their staff members from disease under the Canadian Labour Code. “Our members are working in institutions right now that have been declared as pandemic sites, and they are not being afforded the protection of a vaccine. They should be a priority,” explains Wilkins.

Prioritizing

UCCO-SACC-CSN also demands that vaccine distribution should first go to priority sites where there is a significant outbreak, or potential outbreaks. “Unfortunately, it seems that CSC hasn’t considered this option,” notes Wilkins.

“Since March, Correctional Officers have been on the front line to protect the Canadian population. As front-line workers, they had to work with COVID-19 infected people, placing them at high risk for infection. We didn’t get any compensation for this, no hazard pay, which was given to other front-line workers. It’s time the Federal Government and the Correctional Service of Canada starts recognizing the dedication of its employees,” concludes Jeff Wilkins.

About the Union

The Union of Canadian Correctional Officers (UCCO-SACC-CSN) represents more than 7400 members, spread across Canada’s five major regions: Pacific, Prairies, Ontario, Québec and Atlantic. UCCO-SACC-CSN represents correctional officers in all 49 federal institutions.

-30-

For further information:

Noémi Desrochers, noemi.desrochers@csn.qc.ca, 514 216-1825