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Prepare for a Potential Decrease in EAP Services

Since its inauguration, the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) has provided help to CSC employees and their families. The EAP services have recently begun shifting away from being some of the best in the public service provided by different regional contracts into one large national contract that will commence on April 1, 2014. As an example, in the Quebec and Prairie regions there has been an EAP provider which has given great service over the years, but on April 1, 2014, the employer will transfer all EAP services to Health Canada, they say as a cost-saving measure. UCCO-SACC-CSN strongly disagrees with this decision, which we believe will have a dramatic impact on services offered.

There are many services that will disappear and that, up until now, have been needed and used by UCCO-SACC-CSN members and their families. For example, during the 2012-2013 fiscal year, the following list of services were provided to 388 correctional officers and 89 family members for a grand total of 477 people in the Quebec Region alone:

- ♦ Guidance counsellor;
- ♦ Sexologist;
- ♦ Special needs teacher;
- ♦ Psycho-educator;
- ♦ Dependencies specialist;
- ♦ Operational trauma specialist;
- ♦ Legal/financial advisor;
- ♦ Advisor for counselling services by video conference;
- ♦ Physical health and stress management advisor;
- ♦ Support for the elderly advisor;
- ♦ Alternative program for operational stress injuries (currently offered to the RCMP and veterans);
- ♦ Staff training sessions on how to manage stress;
- ♦ Training sessions for the mutual aid network;
- ♦ Desensitization sessions following a critical incident;
- ♦ Support for families when one of our employees is the victim of an assault or threatened because of their role with CSC, or when an employee committed suicide.

Now with the shift to Health Canada (Employee Assistance Services), that has already occurred in the Pacific and Atlantic regions, we will have access to fewer counsellors with fewer specialties.

UCCO-SACC-CSN believes that the EAP is an invaluable program that cannot be evaluated with an accounting book. With all studies showing that the correctional environment is an extremely difficult workplace, CSC should rightly be making more of an investment in its employees. Instead, it has decided to decrease the number and quality of services to provide only the bare minimum.

We cannot remain indifferent to the critical needs of our colleagues in distress, their partners and children! UCCO-SACC-CSN has sent letters to various government Ministers to ask that this decision be reversed. Support us in our efforts to stop the transfer of EAP services to Health Canada by voicing your concerns to your local members of Parliament.