

Meeting with Minister Ralph Goodale **DISCUSSING CRITICAL ISSUES FOR CX**

On April 16, UCCO-SACC-CSN met with Public safety Minister Ralph Goodale to discuss several issues of importance to Correctional Officers. Here is a summary of what we discussed with the Minister.

We opened the meeting by presenting the Minister with a copy of *Working on the Edge* and thanked him for his government support to fund National Research/Treatment Centre for Public Safety Officers and First Responders

Administrative Segregation – We emphasized to the Minister the importance of this tool for Correctional Officers as it pertains to institutional safety for all staff and inmates. We highlighted that the diminished use of segregation has led to an increase in security incidents and assaults and gave RPC Saskatoon as a concrete example of that. We asked to be consulted on any policy and legislative changes that the government intends on making as a result of recent court decisions. The Minister responded by saying that changes would be coming as the courts have mandated the government to do so, but with that being said the government will be appealing the BC court decision. He also went on to say that safety is a priority and that for any forth-coming changes, either through policy or legislation, our concerns will be heard and considered. As he asked for information indicating an increase in assaults, we promised to share the report which highlights 10 sites that have seen an increase and project further increases.

Blood Samples Act – We once again urged the Minister to introduce legislation (a campaign promise made by the Prime Minister) that will help protect officers following significant exposures of bodily fluids of inmates. We suggested that the Minister review a private members bill prepared by MP Mark Gerretsen (Liberal – Kingston & the Islands). The Minister was not aware of the draft bill but he said he would review it through Mr. Gerretsen's office. We provided the Minister with a hard copy of the draft bill and committed to providing the list of exposures incurred by Correctional Officers since 2009. We also pointed out to the Minister that 8 out of 10 provinces already have this type of legislation for Correctional Officers.

Prison Needle exchange – We pointed out to the Minister that we were very concerned with government's statement from the health Minister about introducing a needle exchange into federal prisons. We suggested to the Minister that this would be an operational nightmare and that the

government should focus its attention on resources to treat inmates with infectious diseases. We provided several good reasons, why the government should not go down this road. The Minister thanked us for sharing our concerns and perspective on this matter.

Body Scanners (as a search tool) – We pointed out to the Minister that Ontario Corrections installed 26 body scanner machines to prevent contraband from entering their institutions and that, even more recently, it was announced by BC Corrections that they too would introduce this technology. We pointed out to the Minister that a very small change to the law could allow us to introduce this safety tool. The Minister was keen on this topic and asked several more questions and ended by saying, "we can change the law".

Lastly, we emphasized to the Minister our feeling of being the forgotten about first responders even though we perform all 3 roles of first responders behind the walls. We pointed out our struggle with trying to get bag valve masks implemented as a piece of safety equipment for Correctional Officers when responding to medical emergencies. The current mask puts us unnecessarily at risk and we pointed out that Correctional Officers performed over 2000 medical interventions in 2014/15 without this piece of safety equipment which is afforded to other first responders.

We also expressed our disappointment that Correctional Officers were not included in a Memorial Grant Program afforded to first responder's and their families should they die in the line of duty. The Minister responded by saying he heard us and was open to having further dialogue on the memorial grant program as well as the other issues we raised.

We thanked the Minister for his time and promised to follow-up on the documents he had requested.

