

**CORRECTIONAL SERVICE CANADA**

**RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS (PACP) IN ITS 47<sup>th</sup> REPORT, ENTITLED: REPORT 5, PREPARING WOMEN OFFENDERS FOR RELEASE—CORRECTIONAL SERVICE CANADA, OF THE 2017 FALL REPORTS OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL OF CANADA**

<b>PACP's QUESTION</b>	<b>CSC's RESPONSE</b>
<p>Regarding Recommendation 3, that Correctional Service Canada (CSC) should provide the Committee with A) an evaluation report on the relevancy, effectiveness and efficiency of correctional programs for women offenders; and, B) a report on the proportion of women inmates who have completed their correctional programs by their first parole hearing eligibility date in 2017–2018 and 2018–2019, and</p> <p>Recommendation 9, that CSC should provide the Committee with a report regarding the change in the percentage of women inmates who finished their correctional programs before their first parole hearing eligibility date,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Committee would like to know how CSC is working to improve the rate for women inmates completing their correctional programs by their first parole hearing eligibility, which is currently around 50% before first parole and 75% before full parole.</li> </ul>	<p>The Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) remains committed to having women identified to participate in a nationally recognized correctional program and complete their program prior to their first parole eligibility. To better respond to the need to optimize program delivery, CSC has established a Program Planning and Reporting Advisory Group to support a more dynamic planning process to complement the existing annual program planning exercise and improve performance results. Additionally, CSC is exploring strengthening regional capacity to enhance timely initial training of program delivery. CSC has also undertaken an evaluation of correctional programs which will help determine ways to improve the delivery and management of women's correctional programs; a copy of the evaluation report will be provided upon completion. Further, with the objective to improve results, CSC has slated the support of research projects in the area of women's correctional programs to examine correctional program timeframes and delivery. CSC is committed to continuing to strengthen and streamline content for women's correctional programs and has started to review program content to enhance efficiency and effectiveness.</p>

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<b>PACP's QUESTION</b>	<b>CSC's RESPONSE</b>
<p>Regarding Recommendation 5, that the Correctional Service of Canada should provide the Committee with a report regarding the change in the number and percentage of women inmates who used employment programs and work releases from 2017–2018 to 2018–2019,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As CSC did not identify possible reasons for the low participation rates in these programs, the Committee would like to know the roots of this problem and how the department is trying address them.</li> </ul>	<p>The Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) recognizes the importance of continually adapting the range of employment options for women offenders considering a variety of factors such as community availability, involvement in other correctional interventions, and the interest of the incarcerated population. Since 2017-2018, CSC has been working to enhance the breadth and depth of available on the job training and vocational certifications available at women offender institutions in consideration of the interest, need, operational feasibility and offender availability. In 2018-2019, CSC worked with two Indigenous organizations to review the women offender curriculum of the National Employment Skills Program (NESP), specifically for Indigenous women. This included updating the material in the NESP for women’s regular curriculum. In addition, an Indigenous organization developed a curriculum specific to Indigenous women offenders, which was implemented in 2019-2020.</p> <p>Institutional results for women offenders have continued to improve over the last three years including a 14% increase in the percentage of women offenders with an employment need identified at intake who received vocational skills training or certification prior to Full Parole Eligibility date (76.3% in 2017-2018 compared to 90.7% in 2019-2020<sup>[1]</sup>). Similarly, an increase is also noted year over year since 2016-2017 for completion prior to first release for women offenders (75.1% in 2016-2017 compared to 88.6% in 2019-2020).</p> <p>Work releases are used in addition to Escorted Temporary Absences that provide opportunities for both paid employment and community service to enhance technical skills and transferable soft skills to support gradual reintegration. While there was a noted decrease of women participating in work releases over the last three years, CSC is reviewing the reasons (e.g. date of eligibly for work release, release to the community) as well as resources in women’s institutions to determine if there are any</p>

<sup>[1]</sup> Performance Direct – all results for 2019-2020 are based on the 11 month review as year end results are not yet available.

	<p>challenges in the ability to facilitate participation in work release opportunities and contribute to enhanced correctional results for women offenders.</p> <p>Opportunities to expand work release options and employment opportunities while under community supervision continue to be explored by the CSC operational sites and with their partners including the National Associations Active in Criminal Justice (NAACJ). These partners work collaboratively with CSC on enhanced communication to community organizations and employers related to hiring offenders through work release or while under community supervision. CSC also continues to work collaboratively with both internal and external stakeholders including Indigenous communities, academic institutions and private employers to integrate employment interventions and services into the sentence continuum, in consideration of other needed interventions and services.</p> <p>Overall employment and employability programs results continue to demonstrate improvement. More specifically, the percentage of employable time spent employed for women offenders under community supervision has increased over 11% since 2017-2018 (48.9% in 2017-2018 compared to 60.5% in 2019-2020<sup>[2]</sup>).</p> <p>CSC will continue to respond to the needs and interests of women offenders in a holistic manner integrating the employment programs and services in the context of their overall Correctional Plan at the most appropriate time in their sentence with close monitoring of the overall objective of finding and maintaining employment in the community.</p>
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<b>PACP's QUESTION</b>	<b>CSC's RESPONSE</b>
<p>Regarding Recommendation 7, that CSC should provide the Committee with a progress report explaining: 1) the extent to which the mental health treatment of women inmates is tracked; 2) the status of a strategy to recruit and retain CSC mental health care staff; 3) the existing agreements between women's penal institutions and psychiatric care centres; and, 4) women offenders' access to mental health care, including the number and percentage of women inmates who could not receive care because of long wait lists,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The Committee would like to know a) Is transition to the Electronic Medical Record (EMR) complete?</b></li> </ul> <p>b) Is there only one agreement in place with a province or territory (i.e., with</p>	<p><b>A) Yes. The Offender Health Information System – Electronic Medical Record (OHIS-EMR) was rolled out to all Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) Health Services staff between April 2016 and March 2017. The system remains accessible to all CSC health services staff at National Headquarters, Regional Headquarters, institutional healthcare units, community mental health and Regional Pharmacies.</b></p> <p>B) Currently, there is one agreement in place with the ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux du Québec for the provision of specialized psychiatric and forensic services in both official languages at the Institut nationale de psychiatrie légale Philippe-Pinel, an external psychiatric hospital in the Montreal, Quebec area. The agreement spans the period from February 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021, and provides 15 acute care beds for women and three beds for male offenders. Negotiations are ongoing for the agreement to span the next five years.</p> <p>CSC continues to explore specialized psychiatric and forensic service options to establish agreements in other provinces and/or regions. However, establishing these agreements can be challenging as provincial health centres face capacity challenges and can lack the security infrastructure for complex cases.</p> <p>Section 29 of the <i>Corrections and Conditional Release Act</i> (CCRA) allows CSC's Commissioner to authorize the transfer of an offender to a provincial correctional facility or hospital in accordance with an agreement entered into pursuant to ss. 16(1)(a) of the Act. That provision allows the Minister, with the approval of the Governor in Council, to enter into an agreement with the government of a province for the transfer of care and custody of inmates to provincial hospitals.</p> <p>C) As of March 30, 2020, there were three women offenders on the wait list for the Institut nationale de psychiatrie légale Philippe-Pinel, an external psychiatric hospital in the Montreal, Quebec area. While on the wait list, women offenders continued to receive services at CSC institutions based on the level of need. None of the women on the waitlist were acute or required urgent admission.</p>

Quebec)? and  
 c) What percentage of inmates are not getting care due to long wait times?

CSC has ongoing quality improvement projects to review the care provided to inmates. This includes reviewing the files of all women offenders with the severe mental illness causing significant impairment alert. Each month, CSC randomly selects up to 10 women offenders who met one of two criteria during the month: (1) rated as considerable or higher on the Mental Health Need Scale (MHNS) or (2) had the severe mental illness causing significant impairment alert activated.

Starting in July 2019, CSC began to code waitlist information. From July 2019 to December 2019, 49 cases were reviewed. Of these cases, four women (8.9%) did not receive treatment within six months of being placed on a waitlist, including two women who withdrew consent.

Institutions	Number of files Reviewed	Did not receive treatment*
Nova Institution for Women (Atlantic)	8	0
Grand Valley Institution for Women (Ontario)	9	0
Fraser Valley Institution for Women (Pacific)	7	0
Edmonton Institution for Women (Prairie)	16	4 (25%)
Regional Psychiatric Centre (Prairie)	7	0
Joliette Institution for Women (Quebec)	2	0
Grand Total	49	4 (8.9%)**

\*Note that this data collection covers only six months from the time the women had the alert activated or when they were rated as considerable need or higher.

\*\*This includes two women who subsequently withdrew consent for treatment when they were offered services to come off of the waitlist