

WOMEN'S PRISON NETWORK



ISSUE #6 - SPRING 2017

Editor's Note:

Welcome to Issue #6 of Women's Prison Network, a magazine by and for women, trans and youth prisoners in Canada.

This is a safe space to share art, poetry, news, thoughts, conversation, connections ... We send copies into all Women & Youth prisons in Canada.

This magazine is not sent into men's prisons!

Send your art, poems, short stories, comments, articles, etc, to Women's Prison Network if you would like to be a part of the next Issue. – Thanks!

Women's Prison Network
PO Box 39, Stn P
Toronto, ON, M5S 2S6

'Women's Prison Network' is produced 4 times per year. It is sent out for free to Women's Prisons in Canada.

If you are on the outside or part of an organization, please consider a donation!!!

Editor: aliyah
info@WomensPrisonNetwork.org

Publication: Women's Prison Network
Publisher: Prison Free Press
PO Box 39, Stn P
Toronto, ON, M5S 2S6

Circulation: 350+
Recirculation: ,???

All original artwork, poems & writings are the sole/soul property of the artist & author.

Fair Dealing & the Canadian Copyright Act Sections 29, 29.1, 29.2:
"Fair dealing for the purpose of research, private study, education, parody, satire, criticism, review, and news reporting does not infringe copyright."

Contents:

Letters	3
News	4-7, 10-12
Poems	8-9
Penpals	13
Resources	13-16

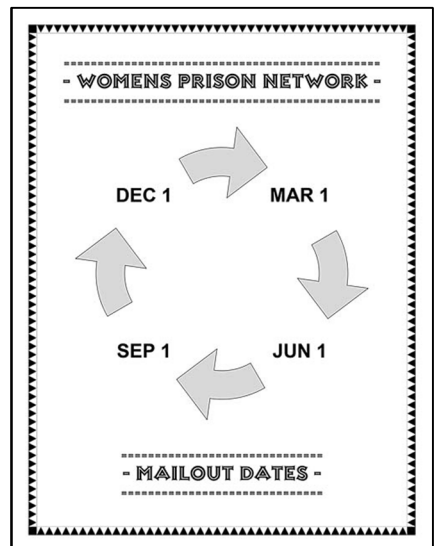
Cover Art: Billy Dee
Back Cover Art: Debra 'Jordi' Lilly

Artists:

Cover Artists will receive a \$25.00 donation. Thank you so much for your work!
Let us know how & where you would like the donation sent to & where you would like your art returned to.
Please note: this magazine is for women, trans and youth from all cultures, so please do not send religious imagery.
Thank you for your art!

Writers:

One column is only 300 words, so do choose your words carefully.
It must be short & to the point.
Poems that are tight & give space for others are the first in.
Thank you for your words!



LETTERSLETTERSLETTERSLETTERSLETTERS

If we don't share, how can they care?

I was an inmate segregated with Terry Baker the night she took her life.

I myself am a mental health inmate. I've been put in isolation for as much as 5 months at a time. I've been segregated on many occasions without reasonable cause throughout my sentence in Provincial and Federal.

I've been put in padded cells and dolly gowns for reaching out. Why would I feel comfortable knowing in my altered state that it will only bring more animosity and negative outcome? Along with the embarrassment of being stripped forcefully if not willing?

I have asked for help when I first arrived at GVI and they had decided it would 'be best for me' to discontinue all my medication in only 2 days. This affected all my interactions, my progress and stress. I have been unable to make it out of the Max Unit and have been back here since April 2015.

It is very difficult to be successful when we are verbally abused and threatened with OC and physical force for simply asserting yourself and doing what you believe is your right. Many women feel helpless to the power they hold over our freedom.

I have had PWS engage in asking me very personal sexual questions (I am also a sex trade worker) and felt forced to humour them with answers and to not report these incidents. Doing so would lose my chance at getting their support to do the paperwork to get me out of Max and into GP.

I feel my defiance has impacted on my Reports and has placed me in a negative light, going as far as to say that I am a sexually aggressive inmate.

The female guards are also guilty of making comments on how an inmate looks, acts and lives. These are the women we are forced to show our naked bodies to on demand, who refer to us as 'the zoo', 'animals' or 'disgusting'. Where is the policy that states that it is okay for a worker to objectify women and classify by social status?

I feel strongly that Terry Baker is only one of future suicides. I have contemplated taking my own life inside and have thought how easy it

would be to overdose when I got released simply because as an inmate I mean so little to anyone when it comes to our preservation.

Many of us are actually trying our hardest to be aware of our faults and circumstances and are willing to make the change and take advantage of the help we are scarcely offered. Even when a lot of the time, we can only think about making it to the next day.

Every one of us comes from a different background with different charges we might not agree on but just like a free person, nobody deserves to die alone on a cold cell floor afraid of the ones who 'Serve and Protect'.

I don't know if I can ever help to make a difference but for what it's worth and for Terry Baker, I do understand that's why I share my struggle and my thoughts.

Our feelings are being taken advantage of because we are labelled 'mental health'. We are people and last time I checked, harassment and bullying people to the point they take their own lives is a criminal offence. These 'law-abiding citizens' have been getting away with this for too long.

- Anonymous

There is a saying in prison that prisoners are the cousins of death because family and society forgets about them.

PRISONERS JUSTICE DAY**∞ In Remembrance ∞**

There are more than 200 Unnatural
Prisoner Deaths in Canada.

- Each and Every Year -

We maintain a PJD 'In Remembrance' page on our website for Prisoners who have died unnatural deaths in Federal and Provincial Prisons, Remands, Lock-ups and Parole in Canada.

If you wish to have someone remembered there, send us a note or email and we will honour your request.

PJD@PrisonFreePress.org

NEWSNEWSNEWSNEWSNEWSNEWSNEWS

Average of 48 Canadian kids held in immigration detention each year

Canada has placed more than 200 Canadian children in immigration detention with their non-status parents since 2011, alongside hundreds of formally detained non-Canadian children, says University of Toronto study.

Based on data obtained from Canada Border Services Agency, the U of T International Human Rights Program found at least 241 Canadian-born children - an average of 48 a year - were held in the Rexdale Immigration Holding Centre in Toronto between 2011 and 2015. The data do not cover detention facilities in other parts of Canada.

On average, they spent 36 days at the detention centre with their incarcerated parents with one boy spending 803 days - over two years - in the detention facility.

Two-thirds of the detained children were housed there for longer than a week and about 31 per cent were held for longer than a month. Eighty-five per cent of the children were under age 6.

"Children who experience even brief periods of detention have extremely negative psychological reactions that often persist long after they are released," warned the 63-page study, *Invisible Citizens: Canadian Children in Immigration Detention*, released Thursday.

"Children who are spared detention but are separated from their detained parents experience similarly grave consequences for their mental health."

Interviews by researchers with nine detained and formerly detained mothers of Canadian children from the Middle East, West Africa, Central America and the Caribbean found the children had difficulty sleeping, lost their appetite, lost their interest in play, and developed symptoms of depression and separation anxiety, as well as a variety of physical symptoms.

"Many of these symptoms persisted after release from detention," the study warned.

According to the border services policy, Canadian children should only accompany their detained parents if there are no family members or friends to care for them, if they are still being breastfed, are too young to be separated from parents or have health issues.

"Canadian children are invisible in Canada's immigration detention system," said Samer Muscati, the human rights program's director. "While all detention of children is horrible, these children are particularly vulnerable because they lack important legal safeguards, including their own detention review hearings."

Under immigration law, these Canadian-born children are citizens and cannot be formally detained, hence they are unable to access legal proceedings that review their continued "de facto" detention, said Muscati.

As such, these children do not have access to detention review hearings, and until recently, adjudicators explicitly declined to consider the best interests of Canadian children in the detention reviews of their parents, he explained. Report author Hanna Gros described the situation of the mothers she interviewed for the study as "sheer helplessness."

"The interviews were emotionally intense. It was heartbreaking to see how helpless they felt when it comes to protecting their children," said Gros, a senior fellow of the U of T human rights program.

"Separating from your child is traumatic. It is not a real choice. Some of the women I met were still breastfeeding."

Naimah was arrested in February 2015 and her 8-year-old daughter, Aaliya, was picked up at school during her recess. The two remained in detention for a year and three weeks.

Aaliya was "crying every day, saying 'Mommy, I want to go to school,' because she loved to go to school," her mother told researchers. "I did everything I could do for this child, a Canadian child, to go back to school." The girl would put on her school uniform in the detention cell and cry, Naimah said.

A psychological assessment later revealed that Aaliya had severe depression and post-traumatic stress disorder, causing her physical and mental problems, including bedwetting, feelings of sadness and anxiety, thoughts of death, frequent nightmares and loss of appetite.

Border officials called the Children's Aid Society to evaluate if Aaliya should be separated from her mother. The study cited the aid worker's conclusion: "You are not abusing your child, so I cannot take your child away from you. If I take her away from you, it would be worse for her."

At her detention review hearings, Naimah said adjudicators repeatedly refused to consider Aaliya's best interest. "We begged them to put me under house arrest so that my child could go to school," Naimah told researchers. "I will never understand what is the benefit of putting my child in detention for a year."

Since the fall, Public Security Minister Ralph Goodale, under public pressure, has initiated a review of the immigration detention system and vowed to explore alternatives to detention.

According to the border services agency, the total number of children in detention across the country (both Canadians and non-Canadians) has dropped significantly. Between April to December of 2016, only 12 Canadian children were housed in the Rexdale detention facility, for an average of 4.5 days.

While progress has been made, Gros said the best interests of the children should take priority and their detention should be avoided altogether.

Nicholas Keung
Toronto Star
Feb 23, 2017

Cruel and Usual Punishment in Canada

In Canada, life in prison rarely means life in prison. Except for a few notorious cases such as Clifford Olson, Paul Bernardo and Russell Williams, if you are sent to prison in Canada, there is a nearly one hundred per cent chance that you will one day see the light of day.

We can say 'lock them up and throw away the key' and 'get tough on crime' all we want but in reality, that's just not how it works here. I urge you to keep in mind that nearly every single person who is sent to solitary confinement in Canada could one day be living in the next house to yours.

Let's pretend your neighbour has two large dogs. Dog number one stays in his crate for eight hours a night and the rest of the time can move around the yard and socialize with other dogs. Dog number two stays in his crate 23 hours a day, gets one hour outside of his crate (also alone, just in a bigger crate) per day and gets all his meals dropped into the crate without any human contact or contact with other dogs.

One day both the dogs escape from their crate as you are walking past the house. Which dog are you more afraid of?

The United Nations has stated that solitary confinement over 15 days amounts to a form of torture. Yet the Toronto Star uncovered that in 2014 six female inmates at the Ottawa Carleton Detention Centre had been held in solitary for more than 30 days and two female inmates were held for more than 60 days. Having always been under the impression that Canada is against torture, these statistics are quite alarming.

In a separate and particularly shocking revelation, The Toronto Star has also shown that one inmate was held in solitary confinement for four years in Thunder Bay, Ontario.

Research has proven time and time again that solitary confinement leads to a worsening of mental health symptoms, can lead to visual and auditory hallucinations, anger, self-harm, aggression and paranoia. You don't even need to read the research to understand this to be true; if you lock someone in a cage and keep them isolated from other humans, they're going to get angry. It's obvious and self-evident. But seemingly not so for prison administrators and federal and provincial governments.

We love to pat ourselves on the back up here in Canada and tell the world how progressive are we, but can we even claim to be progressive when we are, by definition of the United Nations, torturing our own citizens?

And we're not only torturing our own citizens. We're largely torturing some of our most vulnerable citizens; the mentally ill. It is no secret that Canadian prisons and provincial institutions have become warehouses for the mentally ill. So if we wouldn't allow solitary confinement in a mental health facility, why are we allowing it in prisons?

I believe that the complete elimination of solitary confinement is something that will happen in my lifetime. But for now, I would like to call on the Liberal Government of Canada to introduce legislation that would outlaw any situation of solitary confinement lasting longer than 15 days.

It's the moral, ethical and humane thing to do.

And after all, it is 2017.

Chris Curry
Huffington Post - Jan 03, 2017

Quebec woman suing over solitary confinement 'hell'

Judge approves class-action lawsuit for federal inmates — particularly the mentally ill — subjected to lengthy periods of administrative segregation in prisons in the province.

A Quebec woman who spent nine months in solitary confinement has been cleared to bring a class action lawsuit which argues inmates subjected to lengthy periods of isolation have had their rights violated.

Bolstered by the condemnation of the United Nations and Canada's prison watchdog, the lawsuit seeks more than \$10,000 in damages from the Correctional Service of Canada for each prisoner held in solitary confinement for longer than a 72-hour period since Feb. 24, 2013.

It also seeks compensation for prisoners with mental-health problems, regardless of how long they were held in isolation.

The representative claimant is Arlene Gallone, a 25-year-old woman who served a year-and-a-half sentence at Joliette Institution for Women starting in February 2013 for robbery, criminal harassment, assault and breach of her parole.

Gallone's lawyer estimates there could be thousands of other federal inmates past and present who may be eligible for compensation if the lawsuit is successful.

Gallone said in an interview that she was sent on four occasions to administrative segregation — the official term for solitary confinement — for two three-month periods, as well as two additional stretches of two months and one month each.

She said the reason she was removed from the general population of inmates could be as insignificant as banging too frequently on her cell door in an attempt to get the attention of a guard, or blocking her toilet.

In total, she spent a total of nine months locked in a cell the size of a bathroom.

"If you're not already claustrophobic, you will become claustrophobic because the room is so small," Gallone said.

"My depression became worse. My anxiety became worse. Also, I lose trust in people easily. If I hear a door slam I'll jump because they always slammed the doors there. I'm so used to sleeping with the door closed that I sleep with my bedroom door closed even now."

The lawsuit describes her experience as "hell," adding that she is still affected by it more than two years later.

The allegations in the lawsuit have not been proven in court.

The suit is just the latest attack on a practice that has been criticized at home and internationally, including by the special rapporteur of the UN Human Rights Council and the UN Committee against Torture.

Last month, an Ontario judge authorized a lawsuit on behalf of mentally ill inmates who were placed in administrative segregation in federal prisons.

In October, Ontario's human rights commissioner accused the province of violating prisoners' rights through the "alarming and systemic overuse of segregation."

The review showed that one-fifth of prisoners had been placed in solitary confinement at least once over a three-month period. More than a third of them had a history of mental health problems. One indigenous inmate at a Thunder Bay jail, Adam Capay, had spent four years in segregation after being charged with the murder of another inmate.

Federally, a 2015 report from the correctional investigator, Parliament's prison watchdog, noted that the average stay in administrative segregation was 27 days in 2015, down from 40 days in 2005.

Last spring, the correctional investigator recommended prison authorities stopped placing the mentally ill in segregation and limit the length of stays in solitary confinement.

In Quebec, there are regulations that limit a prisoner's stay in administrative segregation at provincial facilities to 72 hours, with a possible one-time extension of 24 hours if an individual is suspected of having ingested contraband.

But recommendations in 2012 urging that the federal government adopt the same rules were rejected.

An inquest into the death of Ashley Smith, an inmate who ended her life while being held in isolation at the Grand Valley Institution for Women in 2007, recommended that administrative segregation stays be limited to a maximum 15 days.

Ottawa rejected the inquest recommendations, although federal Justice Minister Jody Raybould was given a mandate to reduce the use of

solitary confinement in Canadian prisons when she took the post in 2015.

Until that happens, Gallone said she is optimistic that her case might result in a positive change in the prison system.

Allan Woods
Toronto Star
Jan 23, 2017

Books Behind Bars helps women in prison stay connected

Books Beyond Bars is a volunteer-run collective that's trying to improve quality of life from incarcerated women at the Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility in Burnside. They're doing this through two main programs: a book-to-prisoners program and a read-aloud program.

As its name suggests, the books-to-prisoners program provides books and journals to the women at the correctional facility. Books Beyond Bars visits the women's section of the jail every second Friday.

"There's a program room that we go into, and we spread the books out onto the table," says Su Donovaro, who has been a member of the collective for about two years. "There's four day rooms in the unit, and the women come down one at a time to look at the books, and to let us know if they have any requests. We also bring in journals - usually everyone wants a journal for writing."

The read-aloud program helps maintain the bond between mothers and grandmothers and their children and grandchildren. They record women reading storybooks, edit the recordings, and then send them to the women's families. This program runs every four to six weeks.

"We get feedback after we send out the books to their kids, about how excited the kids are to get the books and to hear their mom's voice," says Donovaro. "We look at it as solidarity work rather than charity work because we come at it from a prison abolition viewpoint. We would like to see an alternative to the prison, but in the meantime, we do this to support folks who are inside."

The Books Beyond Bars mission statement elaborates: "Books Beyond Bars operates with the belief that the prison system is fundamentally flawed. Sending women to prison does not

support people in dealing with the issues that led to their incarceration: poverty, abuse, anger, addiction, etc."

Although they maintain a library in a space donated by Dal Legal Aid, Books Beyond Bars is always looking for additional donations of books and journals. Every couple of weeks, the collective publishes a wish list on Facebook, in the hopes that someone might be willing to donate a copy they've finished. There are two pick-up locations, one at Venus Envy and another at Loaded Ladle in the Dalhousie Student Union Building. They also accept monetary and gift card donations.

Sarah Sawler
Halifax Magazine - Dec 2, 2016



End Immigrant Detention Network

We are an organization of volunteers working towards justice for those incarcerated. Many of us are women and trans people of colour. Our main focus has been on immigration detainees. However, we want build relationships with ALL inmates.

We run two phone lines in Ontario:

- If you are at a facility with a 705 area code, you can call us collect at 705-340-4432 on Wed, Thurs, Fri, or Sun from 2-4 pm.
- If you are at a facility with a 905 or 416 area code, you can call us collect at 416-775-0242 any day.
- If we do not pick up the first time, keep trying. Sometimes we can't answer our phones.

Not in Ontario? Need a listener or want a pen pal? Write us here:

The Centre for Women & Trans People
U of T, North Borden Bldg
563 Spadina Ave, Room 100
Toronto, ON, M5S 2J7

POEMSP OEMSPOEMSPOEMSPOEMSPOEMS

POEMSP OEMSPOEMSPOEMSPOEMSPOEMS

The System

Deep inside me, I'm on fire
 In the midst of my gut
 In the pits
 I can feel the flames spit
 As I grit on my teeth. Angry!!!
 I fall weak to the grip
 This shit reeks, choking' up
 I can't speak, broken up
 Fuck it!!! I'm a freak!!!
 They givin' up on me
 Now they throwin' out the key
 I'm just another number
 Now I'm stuck in a rut
 Man I'm shit outta luck!
 Lock me in, keep it cuffed,
 Max me out, fuck me up!!!
 Only god can judge me

- Chantel Patterson

Untitled

I sit in my cell
 I finally know why I'm here
 The pain still lurks
 I am angry for what I did
 Yet I accept it
 I am sad for whom I lost
 Yet they visit me in my dreams
 I am content for the chance I've been given
 I could have become a lifer
 I'm inspired by the road I walk
 I met some solid friends
 I am honoured by love
 And married him
 I've lived a life of hell
 I stood bitter, alone, defiant, and destructive
 I cared and loved no one
 Not even myself
 A five year challenge
 Did I change?
 Did I learn from my mistakes?
 When I walk out the secured gates
 I will know

- Christina LaRue (Asp)

Whispers in the Dark

Whispers in the dark
 Keep calling her name
 They're telling her she's
 No longer part of the game
 She's got three children
 And nowhere to run
 She thinks of the consequences
 And what could be done
 He promises her over & over again
 This will be the last
 His promises, his lies,
 They all come so fast

Make-up can no longer
 Cover the damage done
 She's pulled all her resources
 There's nowhere left to run
 She reaches to the closet
 And pulls out the gun
 She knows there may
 Be consequences to pay
 But a reason for living
 She could no longer see
 So she pulled on the trigger
 And set her spirit free
 Gone forever
 Her happiness and pain
 Gone forever is the life
 She could no longer sustain
 She turns to her shadow
 Which no longer remains
 She realizes then
 This life has all been in vain
 Whispers in the dark
 Keep calling her name
 They're telling her
 She's no longer part of the game

Shannon Sederquest

The best mind-altering drug is the truth.

- Jane Wagner

If I don't speak, this silence is also going to kill me.

- Rehana Hashmi

POEMSP OEMSPOEMSPOEMSPOEMSPEOMS

POEMSP OEMSPOEMSPOEMSPEOMSPOEMS

Jail

Take a look at yourself
 Do you like what you see?
 Locked away in a cell
 Long time till you're free
 Take time to reflect
 Look into your soul
 Was the crime worth the time
 Spent in this hell hole?
 Myself, I am taking this advice
 So I don't end up back in here, looking for Christ
 Bible studies, programs
 Saying, I won't come back again
 Waiving parole, so there's no control
 I can go home to my man
 Tired of time spent behind concrete walls
 Strip search, blue shirts, stainless steel stalls
 Doing everything I can
 To make it a comfortable stay
 Fuck that!
 I'm going to do what I can to stay away

- Samantha Lacroix

Lost Friend

There once was this girl
 I used to know
 She was the sun
 That brightened up my day
 Now when I see her
 I go the other way
 She was my best friend
 And more than that
 Till this day
 I still want her back
 Wish I could tell her
 How I feel
 She walks by me
 As if I weren't real
 Hate this feeling
 Wish I were gone
 56 days seems too long

- Heather

Educate yourself for the coming conflicts.

- Mary Harris Jones (Mother Jones)

Guards

How do you look straight-faced & lie to us
 Then wonder why we make such a fuss
 You make everything seem so out of your way
 And get mad when we have something to say
 For just a moment, imagine yourself in our place
 Guaranteed you'd be unhappy in this space
 It's bad enough when the reality hits
 And the memories come back in little bits
 The realization of the things we've done
 And the fear of not knowing what's to come
 It's not that we're looking for any sympathy
 But we could use a little compassion & empathy

- Tammy Chrzaszcz

VCW

A is for Always being in jail
 B is for Because we can't get bail
 C is for Court that we attend
 D is for D.O. once and again
 E is for Everything that we done
 F is for Freedom, now we got none

- Michele Lampart

Living Life

I lived life all the wrong ways
 I did the drugs every day
 What can I say
 I couldn't live without them in any way
 Now things have turned for the better
 I'm actually getting it together
 I feel so much better now that I'm clean
 Reality is real, this is not a dream
 Methadone is what I'm on now you see
 And it's taken the way it should be
 I just want to live life the way it should be
 With honesty & caring & love too
 And do for myself, not just for you!
 So please trust me when I say
 I'm going to be living life a different way

- Kathy Polchies-Roberts

Correctional Service flip-flops on transgender inmate placement policy

Canada's prison service has abruptly reversed course on its new policy for transgender inmates, one day after Prime Minister Justin Trudeau promised to promote equality for all trans Canadians, including those behind bars.

Correctional Service Canada spokesman Jean-Paul Surette said trans inmates will now be considered for placement in prisons based on their gender identity rather than their genitalia.

"We are currently assessing - on a case-by-case basis - individual inmates' placement and accommodation requests to ensure the most appropriate measures are taken to respect the dignity, rights and security of all inmates under our custody," he told CBC News in an email.

That is a sharp departure from CSC's revised policy directive on trans inmates that was released on Monday, which confirmed a previous rule that based placement on birth sex rather than gender identity.

"Pre-operative male to female offenders with gender dysphoria will be held in men's institutions and pre-operative female to male offenders with gender dysphoria will be held in women's institutions," the Jan. 9 policy reads.

The change in course comes after Trudeau, during a town hall meeting in Kingston, Ont., made an off-the-cuff promise to ensure transgender inmates can serve their sentences in institutions based on their gender identity.

The pledge came in response to a question from a transgender woman and advocate who described Canada's current placement policy as "torture."

Trudeau said the issue hadn't been on his radar, but would act now that it is.

"I will make sure we look at it and we address it and we do right in recognizing that trans rights are human rights and we need to make sure we are defending everyone's dignity and rights in every way we can," he said.

CSC does not track the number of trans inmates.

Policy review underway

Surette said the entire policy will remain under review to ensure it is consistent with the principles of Bill C-16, which would amend the Canadian Human Rights Act to include gender

identity and gender expression in the list of prohibited grounds of discrimination.

That bill is making its way through Parliament.

"As part of that review, we are undertaking stakeholder consultation, including with inmates and with the LGBTQ2 advocates, to identify possible changes to the policy," Surette said.

The Office of the Correctional Investigator of Canada and human rights advocates have raised concerns about gender-sensitive procedures such as strip searches, pat-downs or urine analysis by members of the opposite sex, and also about about exploitation, harassment, intimidation and sexual violence perpetrated against trans inmates.

New sex reassignment surgery rules

Among the changes in the revised policy is one that makes it easier for transgender inmates to get sex reassignment surgery.

Under the new rules, an offender will be eligible if they have lived in an identity-congruent gender role for 12 continuous months and it is recommended by a specialist physician. Under the previous policy, the individual was required to have lived 12 months in the gender role in the community prior to incarceration.

Other elements of CSC's revised transgender policy:

- CSC will pay the cost of sex reassignment surgery.
- Transgender offenders will be permitted to wear clothing appropriate to their self-identified gender.
- CSC will proceed without delay to determine the timing of the surgery, taking into account operational considerations and the offender's release date.
- The same health professional specialist who provided care to the offender throughout the gender transition prior to his/her incarceration will be retained, unless the offender and CSC agree to a different choice.
- The head of the institution will ensure that staff who have regular contact with transgender offenders have the necessary knowledge to effectively respond to their needs.

Kathleen Harris

CBC News

Jan 13, 2017

Pricier jail phone calls in Manitoba dial up outrage

The province is taking heat for contracting a Texas-based private prison phone service that's hiking rates for Manitoba inmates.

The charges levied by Synergy Inmate Phone Solutions, a San Antonio-based company with extensive contracts in U.S. jails and detention centres, include fees for phone calls and levies families must pay to buy prepaid phone cards for relatives behind bars or in custody awaiting trial.

The fees began rolling out in Manitoba provincial jails this month, including Milner Ridge Correctional Centre, the Headingley Correctional Centre and the Women's Correctional Centre. It also covers the Winnipeg Remand Centre.

"I've been visiting my - 11 -iancé in the remand centre for over a year now and the last time I made a deposit on his phone, the prepaid card for offenders, it cost me \$13, on top of the \$60 I put on it. It's insane. They're ripping people off," said a woman the Free Press is calling Trinity to protect her identity and her partner's, a man due to be sentenced next month on an assault conviction.

Trinity listed other new fees this month, including a handling fee on canteen accounts that inmates use to purchase water, candy, chips and magazines at the remand centre.

"All of this is new, trust me. I've been going there for over a year and I've never seen anything so drastic. There are a lot of people upset about it," Trinity said.

The John Howard Society and the Opposition NDP have lobbied the province to release a copy of the contract with Synergy, with no success so far.

"The difficulty is the cost to inmates," said John Hutton, executive director of the John Howard Society of Manitoba, which advocates on behalf of inmates.

"Previously, local calls were free but the cost of them was subsidized with a mark-up at the canteen. But now they've put the cost directly on the inmates and the province gets a cut, a commission on the contract, although I'm told it's a small one.

"This isn't about being fair, it's about doing the right thing and if inmates can connect with their families, they're fairly likely not to reoffend."

Synergy also provides phone services at provincial correctional facilities in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Alberta and Saskatchewan. A coalition in Saskatchewan is fighting the phone fees in jails there.

Former NDP attorney general Andrew Swan, now an Opposition MLA, said he knows of a Manitoba couple who paid more than \$4,000 in the space of five months for the wife to keep in phone contact with her husband when he was incarcerated in a Saskatchewan jail.

"I can talk until I'm blue in the face and say this is cruel and it's unfair but I don't think many Manitobans, unfortunately, will be very concerned," Swan said.

"But as soon as you say this is impairing public safety, that you're making it tougher for people to keep up positive relationships, when they come out of jail, that everybody who's serving time is going to be back in the community, well, we all want them to have as easy a landing as possible."

Synergy, which has a Canadian subdivision based in Edmonton, referred calls to the province.

A provincial spokeswoman told the Free Press when the first complaints surfaced that "I'd just note that the previous phone system was provided by MTS, which is also a privately owned company — so I don't know if there's a correlation to be made. From what I understand, entire prisons can be run by corporate entities under the U.S. model, which is obviously not the case here."

Alexandra Paul
Winnipeg Free Press
Oct 26, 2016

What inmates pay:

Prepaid calls – \$3 per call, up to 15 minutes in length, long distance or local. Three free calls up to 15 minutes each a day for suspects facing trial but not sentenced.

Collect calls – \$4.30 per call, up to 15 minutes in length, long distance or local.

Voicemail – \$1.25 per message, paid by sender. Messages from a privileged or program source are free.

Kiosk trust deposits (cash only) – \$2 per transaction plus two per cent of deposit.

Credit card transactions (kiosk, online, phone) – \$2 plus five per cent of deposit plus taxes.

Inmate families say prison drug-scanning tool finds false positives at 'alarming' rate

Families of federal inmates are urging Canada's prison system to end the use of drug scanning devices they say are faulty and unreliable.

Mothers Offering Mutual Support (MOMS), a group whose members have sons and daughters in prison, has filed an electronic petition in Parliament calling on Public Safety Minister Ralph Goodale to review the use of ion scanners and explore more effective alternatives to keep drugs from getting behind bars.

The ion scanners devices are designed to detect trace amounts of particles. Correctional Service Canada has placed these devices in the lobbies and mailrooms of some of its prisons in a bid to reduce the flow of drugs into its facilities.

The devices are extremely sensitive, and MOMS says in its petition that the scanners set off false positive readings at an "alarming" rate.

Anne Catral, whose son is incarcerated at Ontario's Warkworth Institution, said she has lost count of the times she has tested positive for morphine, hash, opium and heroin. She follows a rigorous regime of washing, cleansing coins and jewelry and driving with plastic gloves before visiting the prison to limit the chances of a false reading.

Catral said a positive test can lead to the visit being denied. It is also recorded on an offender's file, affecting future private family visits, transfers, and parole, she said.

She says she's been denied entry, and knows others who have been as well.

"It causes a great deal of stress, because people know it has serious consequences," she told CBC. Catral said the Ion Mobility Spectrometry (IMS) devices used by the Correctional Service Canada can pick up trace amounts of prohibited substances through items like cash, credit cards, or even particles in the air.

Family ties key to rehabilitation

"CSC is paying lip service to keeping drugs out by relying on these tests and is destroying relationships and families in the meantime," she said. "Maintaining strong family ties through visits is a very important component in the rehabilitation and reintegration process but the

damage caused by this flawed system is counter-productive."

International research posted on CSC's website acknowledges problems with the technology.

"One drawback of IMS technology is that it measures drug particulates down to the nanogram, identifying false positives frequently," it reads.

The research notes one study found cocaine was the only drug that was reliably tested while heroin and amphetamine were poorly detected.

"Overall, this review indicates that IMS units are useful in detecting most drugs. However, these devices are often oversensitive and are limited in their ability to detect certain forms of drugs," it concludes.

Risk assessment

CSC spokeswoman Esther Mailhot said ion scanners are one of several tools used to stop the flow of drugs and other contraband into prisons, complementing sniffer dogs, body searches and surveillance.

She said CSC does not collect data on false positives in testing.

"CSC policy requires that a risk assessment be completed following a positive indication on the ion scanner before a decision is made regarding the visitor's request for access to a CSC institution. With these added procedures, there is a low likelihood that visitors be refused entry into a federal penitentiary based on these devices alone," she said.

Ion scanners are typically placed at front entrances or within the mailroom of the penitentiary to detect minute traces of substances.

Samples are collected by wiping or vacuuming objects, then placing the filter or swipe into the unit.

The e-petition to end the use of ion scanners, sponsored by Quebec NDP MP Matthew Dubé, will be open for signatures until April 5, 2017. An electronic petition is open for signatures for 120 days. If it gathers more than 500 signatures, the government is required to respond.

Kathleen Harris

CBC News

Dec 21, 2016

Facts about HIV and HCV

With some exceptions, HIV and HCV infection is generally more prevalent among women than men in prison, particularly among those who have a history of injection drug use.

In a study of provincial prisons in Quebec, the HIV and HCV rate among incarcerated women was, respectively, 8.8 and 29.2 percent, compared to 2.4 and 16.6 percent among male prisoners.

In a study of female prisoners in British Columbia (B.C.), self-reported rates of HIV and HCV were 8 percent and 52 percent, respectively.

In a 2007 nationwide survey by CSC, the HIV and HCV rate among federally incarcerated women was 5.5 and 30.3 percent, compared to 4.5 and 30.8 percent among federally incarcerated men. Aboriginal women reported the highest rates of HIV and HCV, at 11.7 and 49.1 percent, respectively.

While the majority of women in prison are voluntarily tested for both HIV and HCV, the provision of pre- and post-test counselling has been reported to be poor, and in some cases, non-existent.

Women in prison are more likely than women in the general population to have faced violence and abuse; therefore, counselling accompanying HIV diagnosis is particularly important. Women in prison have concerns about the privacy and confidentiality of their HIV status.

Women have reported being forced to draw unwanted attention. Women (37.0%) reported being HCV-positive. Aboriginal women were identified as a particularly high-risk group because they reported the highest rates of HIV (11.7%) and HCV infections (49.1%).

These data highlight the need to ensure that culturally appropriate, effective interventions that decrease risk-behaviours and increase utilization of harm-reduction measures are offered to meet the needs of Aboriginal women.

PEN PALS

Send in your ad: 25 Words or Less. We use Code #'s for Personal Safety. When mail contact has been made, it is up to you to exchange your name & address, ... but only, if that is what you choose to do.

Please Print Your Name & Address on All Letters and Photos.
All Envelopes are Destroyed !!!

Participants agree that by using this service, it is at their own risk, and by accessing this service all users agree that WPN is not to be held liable in any way for harms suffered as a result of this service.

This magazine is sent into women's prisons only. (ads are not on web version)

**Not
Available
Online !**

Important Hep C Update!

New treatments with excellent success rates are now available!

These are in pill form and have little or no side effects. The downside is the cost of course: \$1000+ per pill.

Harvoni: \$60,000 for 8 weeks (Genotype 1, low viral load, never-treated)

Harvoni: \$90,000 for 12 weeks (Genotype 1)

Sovaldi: \$55,000+ perhaps with other drugs for Genotypes other than Genotype 1

Federal Prison: you may be able to start your treatment while inside.

Provincial Prisons: Depending on the province, you may have to wait till you get out.

When released, get right on welfare or disability. Federal health care programs like NIHB & IFH may cover costs.

Go to a Clinic and get your blood work done so you can get into a Treatment Program at no cost to you.

Important: most prisons, provincial drug plans, and private plans restrict the new drugs to people who have chronic hep C plus scarring of the liver (stage F2 or higher fibrosis). Both never-treated & people for whom Peg-Interferon & Ribavirin did not work are eligible for the newer treatments. For people with hep C and no liver scarring or light scarring (less than F2 fibrosis), it's still Peg-Interferon & Ribavirin. Get your liver tested! New tests have replaced biopsies: Fibre-test (blood) & Fibro-test (imaging).

Hep C = 18-30% of prisoners
HIV = 1-5% of prisoners

Do Not Share or Re-Use:
needles, ink, ink holders, rigs,
- anything in contact with blood! -

**BLEACH DOES NOT
KILL HEP C**

Hep C & Eating Well Inside

Your liver is your body's processing and power plant – everything you consume filters through it. If you have hep C, eating well can slow its progression in your liver.

We have some general tips on healthy eating for hep C inside. A diet low in fat, sugar, cholesterol, and sodium, but high in complex carbohydrates and sufficient protein is recommended.

- If you can, talk to health care and see if you qualify for a low-fat, low-cholesterol, or high-protein diet.
- Order peanut butter or protein bars from canteen. Watch your protein bar intake as they often contain lots of processed sugar.
- Eat protein like meats, peanut butter, beans, nuts, and cheese. Your body needs protein to fight infection and heal damaged liver cells. Protein helps you build and maintain muscle. Eat high-fat protein sources like meat, peanut butter and cheese in moderation.
- Eat carbohydrates. You need carbs to give you energy. Try to avoid high-sugar foods like candy, and go for complex carbs like pasta, potatoes, bread, fruits & vegetables.
- Eat all your vegetables – whatever you can get. You get vital nutrients from fruits and vegetables. Drink water. Coffee and cola can dehydrate you. Flush your system with some water.
- Cut back on fatty and salty foods if you can, including deep-fried foods. They make your liver work overtime.
- Cut down or stop drinking. Alcohol is very hard on your liver.
- Try to exercise a bit every day. Walk or jog around the yard. Lift weights to keep your muscles strong or get the blood flowing with push-ups and sit-ups.
- Watch your health. Put in a health care request if you get swelling or pain in the right side of your torso.
- Educate yourself about hepatitis C.

* If you have advanced liver disease or another condition like diabetes that requires a special diet, try to talk to a health professional before making changes to your diet.



F.E.A.T. - Family Visitation

F.E.A.T. for Children of Incarcerated Parents was founded in 2011 to support the needs of the over 15,000 children in the Greater Toronto Area that have a parent in the criminal justice system.

F.E.A.T.'s Family Visitation Program provides weekend transportation from Toronto to correctional facilities in Southern Ontario for children and families to visit imprisoned loved ones. During our trips, F.E.A.T. provides free snacks and refreshments, offers a variety of games and activities, and plays movies. Our bus is a place where youth and families have a chance to talk about their experiences of having a loved one inside and receive support from mentors and other riders. Our Family Visitation Program is free for anyone 18 years old and younger. If you are interested in participating in our program, please call or email F.E.A.T. to register today.

For more information or to book a seat on the bus please contact Jessica or Derek Reid by email at info@featforchildren.org or by phone at 416-505-5333.

A Child of an Incarcerated Parent

The Reality

- *Every year over 150,000 adults are remanded into custody which results in approximately 180,000 innocent children who suffer from the traumatic effect of parental incarceration*
- *Over 5,000 children are impacted by parental imprisonment in the GTA*
- *The number of children affected by parental incarceration only increased with the passing of the Crime Bill C-10*

The Need

- *Despite the growing prevalence of these innocent victims the resources available are minimal*
- *The cost and lack of accessibility to correctional facilities restrict child-parent visits. Consequently, some children can never visit their incarcerated parents*

The Impact

- *Children of incarcerated parents grieve the loss of their parent*
- *These children are four times more likely to be in conflict with the law*
- *Social stigma of incarceration causes some families to avoid discussing the absence of a parent*

Research suggests that parental incarceration has a detrimental impact on children. These innocent children suffer the traumatic experience of being separated from their parent. Following parental imprisonment, children are faced with a myriad of challenges including:

- *feelings of shame, grief, guilt, abandonment, anger*
- *lowered self-esteem*
- *economic instability*
- *social stigma and isolation*
- *disconnection from parent*
- *insecurity in familial and peer relationships*
- *school absenteeism, poor school performance*
- *difficulty in coping with future stress & trauma*
- *compromised trust in others including law enforcement*

featforchildren.org ~ 416-505-5333

Prison Radio

- Halifax – CKDU 88.1 FM
Black Power Hour – Fri 1-3 pm
Youth Now! – Mon 5-6pm
- Montreal – CKUT 90.3 FM
PRS – 2nd Thurs 5-6 pm & 4th Fri 11-noon
- Guelph – CFRU 93.3 FM
Prison Radio – Thurs 10-11 am
Call-in 519-837-2378
- Vancouver – CO-OP 100.5 FM
Stark Raven – 1st Mon 7-8 pm
- Kingston – CFRC 101.9 FM
Prison Radio – Wed 7-8 pm

This program features content produced by CFRC volunteers and by other campus and community radio broadcasters, including CKUT Montreal's Prison Radio and Vancouver Co-op Radio's Stark Raven programs.

The last Wednesday of each month, CPR features 'Calls From Home', sharing letters, emails, voice messages and music requests by and for prisoners and their loved ones.

Prisoners and their loved ones are invited to contribute music requests, messages and suggestions for the program.

Write: CPR c/o CFRC, Lower Carruthers Hall,
Queen's University, Kingston, ON, K7L 3N6
Email: CFRCprisonradio@riseup.net
Call: 613-329-2693 to record a message
or music request to be broadcast on-air.

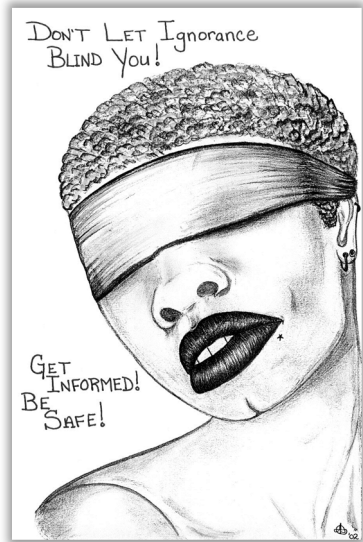
Mother's Day Bus to GVI!

FEAT for Children of Incarcerated Parents is offering free transportation to GVI for families to visit from Toronto on:

Mother's Day
Sunday May 14th

Pick-ups are at Toronto locations
in the morning.

For more information:
info@featforchildren.org
416-505-5333



If you are a woman, trans or youth prisoner and would like to receive a copy of 'Women's Prison Network', write to us and we will put you on our mailing list. Please let us know if you move.

This magazine is by and for you.
Thank you for sharing!

Women's Prison Network Spring 2017 - Issue #6

PO Box 39, Stn P
Toronto, ON, M5S 2S6

info@WomensPrisonNetwork.org

download & print:
WomensPrisonNetwork.org

Send in your work
before May 1, 2017
Summer Issue #7 is sent
out Jun 1, 2017