

WOMEN'S PRISON NETWORK



ISSUE #7 - SUMMER 2017

Editor's Note:

Welcome to Issue #7 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!!!

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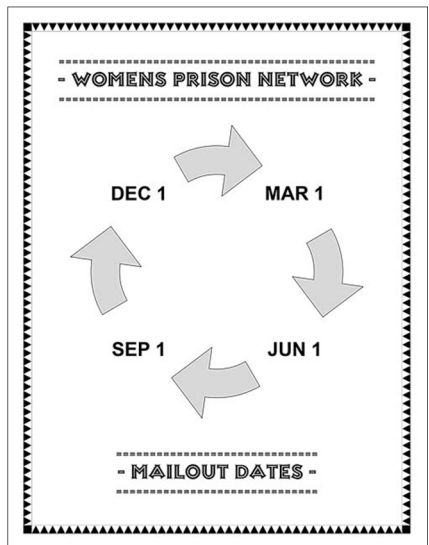
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Cover Artists will receive a \$25.00 donation. Thank you so much for your work!
Let us know how & where you would like the donation sent to & where you would like your art returned to.
Please note: this magazine is for women, trans and youth from all 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!



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Women prisoner mentorship program faces uncertain future

The future of a mentorship program that assists recently released women inmates reintegrate back into society is facing mounting uncertainty as organizers say its funding is rapidly running out. Unlocking the Gates has operated since 2012 and matches former inmates with prisoners released from the Alouette Correctional Centre, a provincial jail for female inmates in Maple Ridge, B.C.

"They have a bus ticket and a clear plastic bag full of their possessions. They're told to find their way home. They don't know what bus to get on, how to get home, and if they are going to make it home. They have no money, no ID, no place to go," said Mo Korchinski, one of the program's coordinators. Furthermore, she said, finding a safe place away from the temptations of street life can be difficult.

"For someone who's freshly coming out of jail, sending them to a homeless shelter is not safe when other people are using there and women are trying to stay clean."

The program tries to address this challenge. For the first 72 hours after the release, a mentor helps the newly released inmate navigate her return back to society by helping her find a place to stay.

Personal connection

Having spent a decade in and out of provincial jails while battling drug addiction, Korchinski knows first-hand how hard it can be to start over.

"The biggest fear was ... living in mainstream society which I had never [done]. I had never had a normal job, where do you fit in? Where do you start bridging that gap from the addiction world to becoming a productive member of society?" Korchinski said it was support from her family and the hopes of a better life and seeing her children again that helped her keep going. Eventually she was able to get her life back on track, obtain a degree in social work and rebuild her relationship with her children.

"Women look and think if you can do this, I can do this," she said. "You [become] that lifeline for people coming out. It gives women hope that there is another side to my life." It makes the

prospect of losing the program when the funding runs out in October even more daunting.

Funding concerns

The majority of the program's funding comes from B.C.'s First Nations Health Authority (FNHA). In a statement to CBC News, it said it recognized the importance of the program but said more stakeholders need to be consulted.

"What started as a project that was funded by a number of partners has now evolved and the FNHA is sole funder," it stated.

"The project serves only 65 per cent [of] Indigenous peoples, therefore as the program serves the general public, a fulsome discussion on its future should naturally involve our provincial partners."

The FNHA says the program's funding will officially be eligible for renewal in February 2018, but Korchinski says funding will run out sometime in October this year.

For her, the idea of losing the program is daunting.

"Our relationships don't end after the 72 hours. Our relationships stay for as long as the women want to stay in contact and I can support," she said.

"If I can make a difference and save one person's life, this program is so worth it."

CBC News
Mar 19, 2017

Transgender inmate hopes to make history with transfer to women's prison

After nearly two decades of taunts, threats and physical abuse behind bars, Fallon Aubee hopes to become Canada's first federal inmate to be placed in a prison based on gender identity rather than biological sex at birth. Aubee, who's serving a life sentence at B.C.'s Mission Institution, has applied for a transfer to a women's penitentiary under a new policy prompted by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau earlier this year.

"It's an opportunity to make some history, I suppose, but it's more so other transgenders can have their needs met and that's my goal," Aubee told CBC News in a telephone interview. "I will be the first one in Canada who goes from a prison for men to a prison for women." Fallon, whose birth name is Jean-Paul, was convicted of first

degree murder in 2003 in a street-gang contract killing case. When first brought into custody at the federal prison in Prince Albert, Sask., Fallon said she was held in segregation for six months after advising officials she was transgender, in conditions that made her feel like a "junkyard dog."

Since then, it has been an uphill battle for single-cell privacy and other basics like women's clothing and toiletries, Fallon said.

"Discrimination has continued unabated, and sadly those that assess whether discrimination has occurred are not trained in the needs of transgender people," she said. Facing insults and derogatory names, Aubee said she was threatened with being thrown over a balcony, set on fire or stabbed to death, if she didn't end her own life.

'Horrifying' threats

"It's horrifying to be told to go kill yourself because you're different," she said.

Over the years, Fallon has carved out a niche working as a prisoners' legal rights advocate, helping on parole bids and fighting for better quality prison food. The role afforded her some protection from peers because she provided a valued service. Other transgender inmates suffer in silence and hide their identity in fear of repercussions, she said. Canada's prison service abruptly reversed course and adopted an interim policy for transgender inmates in January, just one day after Prime Minister Justin Trudeau promised to promote equality for all transgender Canadians, including those behind bars.

He was asked about it at a town hall meeting in Kingston, Ont., and made the off-the-cuff pledge to address what advocates see as a human rights issue. Now Correctional Service is considering transfers and other accommodations on a case-by-case basis, replacing the strict long-standing rule that based placement on genitalia rather than gender identity and considered transfers only after sex reassignment surgery. CSC is conducting a broader review of all its transgender policies to ensure they comply with human rights legislation that is now before Parliament. "The Correctional Service of Canada is committed to ensuring that inmates who identify as transgender are given the same protection, dignity and treatment as others," said spokeswoman Lori Halpern.

'Important development'

Jennifer Metcalfe, a lawyer with the West Coast Prison Justice Society, called it an "important development."

"It allows transgender women to live in women's prisons, which is key to being treated equally as women, and is so important for their personal safety and dignity," she said.

Metcalfe hopes the informal policy will lead to a formal change on placement based on gender identity, and ensure staff and prisoners are properly trained to support the new policy. Last year, Ontario became the first jurisdiction in Canada to allow inmates to serve their sentences in institutions based on self-identified gender, and to be referred to by their chosen names and preferred pronouns. At the time the provincial government called it "the most progressive policy on the treatment of trans inmates in North America."

Ontario leads on trans policy

"Having a dedicated policy in place for trans inmates is an important step forward to ensure that all inmates are treated with dignity and respect when in our care and custody," Yanni Dagonas, spokesman for Ontario's Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services Marie-France Lalonde told CBC. "It ensures that the human rights of the individual are respected by protecting a person's gender identity and gender expression, while promoting fairness and safety of all correctional staff and inmates."

It is not known exactly how many offenders are placed in Ontario jails based on gender identity.

British Columbia became the second province to change its policy, and now permits placement according to gender identity. Aubee plans to have sexual reassignment surgery eventually, but is hoping for a decision on her transfer in coming weeks. She is grateful the prime minister did what she calls the "proper and pro-acting thing" by pushing for human rights for transgender Canadians, even those who are incarcerated.

"I wake up in the morning, the first thing I say to myself is 'Oh it's going to be a beautiful day, I'm a woman,'" she said. "Then when I step out of my room I'm realizing that I'm living in a prison for men and I have to face all of those challenges all day long, all over again."

Kathleen Harris

CBC News - Apr 23, 2017

Wynne government promises 'bold transformation' of jail system

The Ontario government is promising to build two new jails and establish minimum standards for solitary confinement as part of what the minister responsible calls a "bold transformation" of the province's correctional system. The government has approved funding for a new 725-bed correctional centre to replace the Ottawa-Carleton Detention Centre and a 325-bed facility to replace two jails in Thunder Bay, Community Safety and Correctional Services Minister Marie-France Lalonde announced Thursday. The province will enhance oversight of the corrections system and move to transfer the provision of health-care services in the jails to the Ministry Health, Lalonde told a news conference at Queen's Park. She said the government will bring forward new legislation in the fall to "comprehensively reform" the corrections system.

"The time to talk is over, the time to act is now," Lalonde said. "It's a bold transformation, it's a lot of work."

Lalonde was responding to a critical report by Howard Sapers, appointed by the Wynne government to conduct an independent review of the segregation system in provincial jails.

"Even though the number of people in Ontario's correctional institutions has been decreasing for a decade, the number of people sent to segregation is on the rise," Sapers writes in the report, made public Thursday.

Sapers found that on any given day 575 people are being held in segregation in provincial jails, with 70 per cent of them "legally innocent" being detained before their trials.

"These people were confined to a six by nine foot cell for 22 or more hours a day, with little human interaction," writes Sapers. He said too many people in segregation should not be there.

"Segregation has become the default response to a diverse range of correctional challenges."

Last year, more than 1,300 people - most of them awaiting trial or bail determination - spent 60 or more days in segregation, including five people who had been isolated for more than three years, Sapers found. He urged the government to end the practice of indefinite segregation, but he stopped short of

recommending that segregation be eliminated entirely. New jails will take years to build "I certainly have called for it to be rare, to be exceptional, and for the standard to be to move people back to least restrictive housing," Sapers said. He said despite the government revising segregation policies in 2015, including for mentally ill inmates, the proportion of that population in segregation has actually increased. The existing jails in Ottawa and Thunder Bay have come under fire in recent years for overcrowding and infrastructure concerns. A government official said it would likely take a few years to put the new correctional centre projects out for bidding, plan the design and finish construction.

"This investment will increase capacity and reduce overcrowding in those communities," Lalonde said, but did not put a price tag on the projects.

Mike Crawley
CBC News
May 04, 2017

Penpal Program for Gay, Queer, Trans Prisoners

The Prisoner Correspondence Project runs a penpal program for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transsexual, transgender, and queer prisoners in Canada, pairing them up with gay and queer and trans people outside of prison for friendship and support. We also coordinate a resource library of information and resources related to health, sexuality, and prisons - get in touch with us for a list of resources we have, or for details. If you want to be paired up with a penpal, please send a short description of yourself & interests to:

Prisoner Correspondence Project
c/o QPIRG Concordia
1455 de Maisonneuve W.
Montreal, QC, H3G 1M8

Please indicate French or in English.
Veuillez svp nous indiquer anglais ou en français.

Invest in people, not in prisons

Provincial and federal governments continue to pay more to incarcerate people when that money could be spent instead on investing in community organizations, treatment programs and family supports, a senator and long-time inmate advocate told a Winnipeg crowd Friday night.

Less than a year into her Senate appointment, Kim Pate continued her 35-year activism to raise awareness about the state of Canada's prisons with a talk at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, the first in a restorative justice lecture series offered by Mediation Services. Pate is drawing attention to the plight of the fastest-growing population of prisoners in Canada - women and girls - most of whom have had histories of physical and sexual abuse and mental illness. "That's a horrendous reality to face, but one a lot of people don't know," said the former executive director of the Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies. Indigenous women, in particular, are disproportionately locked up in Manitoba and across Canada and are "under-protected and over-policed," Pate said in an interview with the Free Press before her presentation. The federal government spends millions a year housing women in the federal prison system.

"Why not invest that in the community and have it benefit not just those people who might otherwise be criminalized, but the entire community? So I think we choose how we spend - it's a policy decision of how we spend our money," she said.

Manitoba has long maintained one of the highest incarceration rates and the highest rate of inmates on remand awaiting trial. Women who are incarcerated are more likely to face additional charges for acting out in custody, Pate said, even though the same behaviour is more likely to be tolerated in male prisoners.

"Really what it was usually was how they were reacting after they'd been strip-searched... or their own experience of having been sexually abused when they were young was to resist anybody doing anything on their body. And so if they violently reacted, if they pulled away, they might get charged and in prison if they swore at people or were disrespectful, they might accumulate charges," she said. "Again, it doesn't excuse bad behaviour, but in my experience...

you wouldn't see men getting criminal charges for that kind of behaviour. You wouldn't see them classified as maximum-security prisoners."

In Manitoba, where the realities of missing and murdered indigenous women and overrepresentation of indigenous inmates are apparent, Pate said, leaders need to do more to follow the "calls to action" identified by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. She intends to continue her advocacy work in the Senate with the goal of reducing the number of inmates in custody who could be helped by improved access to mental-health services, addictions treatment and more community support. She is preparing to embark on a tour of Canadian prisons with the human rights committee.

"I have an obligation to use whatever privilege I have now because of my education and because of this position to work as hard as I can to ensure these issues are dealt with."

Katie May
Winnipeg Free Press
May 13, 2017

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

Province gets 'kickback' from inmates' collect calls

A wall-mounted phone by the steel doors of a jail cellblock is a precious lifeline to the outside for inmates, but in Ontario, calling their loved ones comes at a price. Inmates can only dial out by placing collect calls. There are no free calls, even if they are local. Ottawa criminal lawyer Michael Spratt has obtained documents that show the government gets a commission from every collect call made from provincial jails.

"This is a kickback," he told CBC News. "What I find unconscionable is that the government and corporations are making money off the backs of people who are presumed innocent and in custody."

Through a provincial freedom of information request, Spratt obtained contracts related to Ontario's "offender telephone management system" and shared them with CBC News.

The documents detail a seven-year agreement between Bell Canada and the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services. The contract shows Bell has agreed to pay the Ontario government a commission based on a percentage of all gross monthly revenue generated by the telephone management system until 2020. The value of the contract isn't disclosed, but the deal states: "There shall be no charges payable by the ministry under the contract to the supplier unless otherwise agreed upon by the parties in writing."

The documents include about 1½ pages of redactions, with the exact percentage of the monthly commission Bell is to pay the province scrubbed from public view. The phone rate Bell charges is also hidden. But the contract does stipulate that Bell will charge the same rates and connection fees it provides to its residential customers.

"The redactions are telling," said Spratt, who is concerned about the lack of transparency.

"What we often say in law is that it looks like a consciousness of guilt when you hide something ... I wonder if the government feels a bit guilty about this revenue system."

Commissions aren't new Ontario's Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services Marie-France Lalonde wasn't available for an interview Friday. In a statement, Lalonde said the current contract expires next year and they'll

"take these issues into consideration" when talking about its renewal. She added the department is looking at ways to make it more "cost-effective" for inmates to communicate, especially when they're far from their support network, and one solution could be to introduce pre-paid calling cards for collect calls. In an earlier email, ministry spokesperson Brent Ross wrote that commissions have been collected since 1997. Inmates in Ontario's 26 provincial jails make an average of 239,000 local calls and 50,000 long distance calls while incarcerated each month. Ross said the commission collected goes into the province's general revenue and is "used to offset tax-based expenditures."

The ministry refused to answer CBC's question about how much money it has made from collect calls from jail, but the phone bills sent to Spratt's law firm paint a revealing picture.

Spratt said Bell sends his firm a bill each month ranging from \$1,000 to \$5,000. The tally of collect calls runs across 30 pages. His clients are usually calling from the Ottawa-Carleton Detention Centre, but because of overcrowding many inmates are transferred and call long distance from out-of-town jails. His firm is charged \$1 per local call, but a 20-minute long distance call costs \$25. Most of the time the inmates call to speak to their lawyer, but sometimes clients will call Spratt's firm so they can be forwarded to the cell phones of family members. The phones from jail can only make collect calls to landlines, and Spratt said many families can't afford the added cost. That hardship is part of the reason why Spratt is considering using this access to information request as a basis for a future constitutional challenge.

"This was the first step in what I feel could be a constitutional challenge to punitive and unfair rates that disproportionately impact poor and vulnerable people in jail," Spratt said.

In an emailed statement, a Bell spokesperson wrote that Bell does not discuss details of any business or government contracts.

Judy Trinh
CBC News
Feb 24, 2017

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Take a Moment

*I can't handle this pounding behind my eyes
 And today I can't handle the bullshit and lies
 So ladies please think before starting anything
 We all know the trouble it can bring
 Just stay out of my space I don't wanna play
 I'm wound up tight so just simply stay away
 Today is not the day to act the clown
 Just don't act up and you won't go down*

- Tammy Chrzaszcz

O Fool I Am

*O fool I am
 O fool I'll be
 But I'll not let
 The cruel world see me
 For I shall hide
 The way I feel
 Just as an orange
 By its peel*

- Helenann Young

There's No Way

*Today has been a disappointing day
 They're trying to hurt me in any way
 They can't get to me
 I just won't let it be
 So it sucks to be them, it can't be done
 I'm the one who won, I'm still number one
 I'm happy to say
 I'm glad it happened this way
 I feel so good inside today
 Nothing can bring me down in any way
 My life is changing for the better
 I actually got it together
 I'm so proud of myself
 There's nothing I don't doubt
 It's a great day to be alive
 There's nothing that I haven't tried
 So when you see me on the street
 You'll know I have a different kind of beat
 Living life the right way
 And looking forward to every new day!*

- Kathy Polchies-Roberts

Untitled

*Yesterday's dead, tomorrow's unborn
 So there's nothing to fear
 And nothing to mourn
 For all that has passed
 And all that has been
 Can never return
 To be lived once again
 And what lies ahead
 Or the things that will be
 Are still in god's hands
 So they're not up to me
 To live in the future
 That is the unknown
 For the past and the present
 We claim as our own
 So all I need do
 Is live for today
 And trust I'll be shown
 The truth and the way
 For it's only the memory
 Of things that have been
 And expecting tomorrow
 To bring trouble again
 That fills my today
 Which god wants to bless
 With uncertain fears
 And borrowed distress
 All I need live for
 Is this one little minute
 For life's here and now
 And eternity's in it*

- Lindsay Dubblesteyne

My Secret

*I'm here to share my secret
 I'm here to come clean
 I'm a drug-addicted beauty queen
 Love the Crystal Methamphetamine
 I love it, so Fuck You*

- Cara Watkinson

Prison should never come between a Mother and her Child

Amid the constant crackle of radios and chatter of inmates, surprising sounds linger in the prison halls. A baby's coo. A mother's gentle soothing. The creak of a rocking chair, rhymes recited from a children's book, scratches of a crayon.

Behind the barbed wire fence at Alouette Correctional Centre for Women, 50 kilometres east of Vancouver, is a state of the art nursery. It's one of the only mother-child units in a Canadian prison system that leaves many children without mothers. In fact, Alouette is the only mother-child unit in a provincial-level institution, where 6,000 women serve time in 18 facilities across the country (there are others in federal prisons, but the vast majority of women are sentenced provincially). Experts estimate 20,000 Canadian children are separated from their mothers because of incarceration every year.

"We judge these women. We say, you're a bad woman, you must be a bad mother, so we punish the child as well," says Dr. Ruth Elwood Martin, director of the Collaborating Centre for Prison Health and Education at the University of British Columbia and a former prison physician.

Children behind bars may sound like fodder for a juicy story or a bad comedy. But over 90 countries around the world – including Canada, the United Kingdom and Germany – have laws allowing prison child care in some form. Eligible women undergo rigorous screening to ensure their children aren't at risk, and the programs have proven benefits. At Alouette, inmate mothers raise their children under supervision, receive parenting and first aid classes, as well as babysitting support. At age four, children transition to living there part time as they begin school. Medical studies show that keeping newborns with their incarcerated mothers is the best thing for the baby's health. Time together leads to improved social and emotional growth, limits anxiety and depression, and boosts immune system development. It's also good for the mother's well-being and rehabilitation. Time with their children is incentive for women to turn their lives around and leads to lower recidivism rates. Bonding time can also heal societal trauma and familial wounds, says Martin, but for most inmate mothers without access to facilities, that

opportunity is lost. Critics say prisons are the new residential schools, contributing to the breakup of indigenous families as the number of indigenous women in Canadian prisons has grown over 100 per cent since 2001. Healing family ties is a major part of reconciliation, and prisons offer a unique opportunity to address some of the residual trauma by supporting family bonds.

"We're dealing with tragically high numbers of indigenous women, many who experienced trauma or substance abuse themselves," says Martin. "We have an opportunity to break that cycle."

For two decades, Martin has been advocating for mothers and babies behind bars, calling for mother-child units in all Canadian correctional facilities. We're echoing her call. Our prison system is meant for rehabilitation, not punishing Canada's most vulnerable families. The damaging effects of separation can be permanent, Martin says. "Once you take a baby away from its mother, there's no going back."

Craig and Marc Kielburger
HuffPost
May 15, 2017



I love people. I love my family, my children . . .
but inside myself is a place where I live all
alone and that's where you renew your
springs that never dry up.

- Pearl S. Buck

Fewer prisoners on parole isn't making us safer

We are wasting money on prisons in Canada. Not that we should remove them, but they are certainly being overused. Prior to the mid-1990s it was widely accepted that imprisonment is a necessary evil that should be used sparingly. Today, imprisonment is viewed as the number one way to deal with criminals. Any methods "too lenient." What has changed? In recent years, we have been told that a "tough-on-crime" approach is the only way to deal with crime effectively, and that prisons can keep our streets safe because they keep criminals off them. However, this so called "safety" is temporary. In 2013-14, of all the guilty findings that resulted in a prison sentence only 3.4 per cent of them were sentenced to a federal prison (a sentence longer than two years). The remaining 96.6 per cent have received sentences shorter than two years, with most getting sentences of six months or less (87.7 per cent). Further, of the inmates in federal prisons in 2014-15, 50.4 per cent were serving sentences shorter than five years and 70 per cent shorter than 10 years. Most prisoners will be released at some point, many of who will be released in a relatively short period of time. Ideally, criminals will serve their sentences, be released from prison and live a productive, crime-free life. Unfortunately, this is not always the way it works. There is no evidence to show that prisons have a rehabilitative effect (in fact, there is some evidence that suggests the opposite), and the transition from prison back into society is not an easy one. This is the role of parole — or at least its original role. After serving one-third of their sentence, a prisoner becomes eligible for parole (released from prison with a list of conditions that must be followed for the remainder of their sentence). The purpose is to facilitate the peaceful reintegration of prisoners back into society. When it works, it is a win-win scenario for both the prisoner and the community.

However, parole is on the decline. Fifty years ago, around 1 out of 5.4 federal prisoners were released on parole and 1 out of 3.6 provincial prisoners. Comparatively, in 2012-13, 1 out of 14.7 federal prisoners were released on parole, and 1 out of 35.9 provincial prisoners. Further, it is uncommon for those who are released on

parole to actually be released at the one-third mark. Rather, on average, parolees are released at the 46 per cent mark of their sentence. The parole system is merely a shell of what it once was. What is happening? The purpose of parole has shifted from the gradual reintegration of prisoners into society to a merit based system that "rewards" those who are judged to pose no risk to society. This is in complete contrast to the original purpose of parole. Today, those who (in theory) need the most time and help to reintegrate back into society are given the least amount of time and help to do so. Parole boards are not allowed to grant parole to anyone who they think might reoffend. It is said that this enhances public safety. Given that many of the prisoners who are "too dangerous" to be granted parole will eventually be released, it can be argued that this actually reduces public safety.

It is understandable why parole boards would be hesitant to release prisoners. They are held accountable for any parolee who reoffends while on parole. When considering public safety, it may be better to release some prisoners too early, than release a lot of prisoners too late.

It was mentioned earlier that we are wasting money on prisons. Here is why. On average, it costs \$115,310 per year to keep an offender in a federal prison. Conversely, it would cost only \$34,432 to maintain that same offender in the community. The misuse of parole is both a public safety and economic issue. The argument here is not that all prisoners should automatically be granted parole. Rather, parole needs to be used more, scrutinized less, and used for the right reasons. The current parole system is a waste of tax dollars, and if it remains in its current state we are better off abolishing parole altogether. Without the appropriate use of parole, imprisonment serves the sole purpose of punishment, without any consideration for rehabilitation and prevention.

Nathaniel Schutten
Toronto Star - Opinion
Apr 17, 2017

When the ice on the razor wire starts to look pretty, you've been in prison too long.
- Trish

B.C. Health Ministry to take responsibility for inmate health care

British Columbia will transfer responsibility for inmate care from its Public Safety portfolio to its Health Ministry, an important change for an disproportionately unwell segment of the population that comes after years of complaints about the separate – and some say unequal – medical system in prisons. As of Oct. 1, B.C. will become just the third province – after Alberta and Nova Scotia – to place prison medical needs under its health portfolio, according to a memo obtained by *The Globe and Mail*.

“This is a very positive change for BC Corrections and will enhance our ability to provide quality health care, mental health and substance use supports for inmates,” states the memo, signed by corrections director Stephanie Macpherson. “[This] will result in better outcomes for inmates through improved information sharing, increased integration with providers in the community, and enhanced continuity of care for inmates on their released from custody.” The internal announcement comes just days after the College of Family Physicians of Canada released a position statement calling on Ottawa, the provinces and territories to make the switch. Prison health advocates hope it augurs a trend across the country, where public safety and justice ministries continue to operate most prison health systems. In 2003, the World Health Organization passed a declaration urging nations to deliver inmate health care through their respective ministries of health. Since then, countless prisoner rights advocates have called for an end to these secondary health system for inmates, citing Norway, Britain and France as forerunners. Jurisdictions that administer inmate care through health ministries have reported lower recidivism, improved file-sharing, greater participation in studies, more robust statistical monitoring and better treatment of TB, HIV, Hepatitis C and STDs. “To suggest correctional authorities should provide health-care is like saying plumbers should do your electrical work,” said Ruth Elwood Martin, a family doctor and clinical professor at the University of British Columbia who has long pushed for the change. “It’s in everybody’s best interest that their health and social needs are addressed so that when they leave correctional facilities, they are

healthy.” Currently, B.C.’s corrections division has full responsibility for the health of inmates. The federal correctional service and most provincial jail systems operate in the same manner.

A report from the John Howard Society of Ontario last year called medical care for inmates in that province “parallel and unequal.” *The Globe* has reported on several examples of inmates in Ontario waiting weeks and months to receive treatment for everything from broken bones to mental health. Similar grievances exist in B.C. “We have seen lot of clients who come into custody who are cut off from medications,” said Jen Metcalfe, executive director of the West Coast Prison Justice Society, a legal-aid clinic for inmates. “We’ve had people cut off ADHD medications and anti-anxiety prescriptions. For someone with a mental illness it’s extremely destabilizing.” Federally, health care delivery is the No. 1 complaint for inmates, according to the Office of the Correctional Investigator, and many critics have called for the duty to be transferred to Health Canada. In B.C., the Ministry of Public Safety contracts out health-care duties to a private firm, Chiron Health Services, which did not respond to a request for comment.

“Even though they are legislatively responsible for providing health care, they don’t have direct control over the quality of health care that’s provided,” said Ms. Metcalfe. “I think the management in B.C. corrections and the medical director want the best for prisoners but they haven’t been able to ensure it because it’s been contracted out.” The Canadian prison population is disproportionately sick. Recent studies have found that up to 90 per cent of inmates suffer from a diagnosable mental illness and over half have an antisocial personality disorder. In Ontario, the life expectancy for women who have served time in jail is 10.6 years shorter than the general population. In B.C., an estimated 50 to 70 per cent of prisoners have hepatitis C.

“When prisoners are treated with dignity and provided adequate health care, it can only have a positive effect on the population in general,” said Ms. Metcalfe.

Patrick White
Globe and Mail
Mar 03, 2017

'A Second Chance' for women coming out of jail

It was a big fall. Bev Dwyer was in her 50's. She had three daughters and ran an accounting firm and private loan corporation. In 2013, it all exploded. Bev was convicted of fraud over \$5,000. She served 20 months at Grand Valley Institution for Women, a federal prison in Kitchener, Ontario.

When she got out - traumatized, unsteady, and forbidden from working in her field - there was another mess, and she was sent back to jail for six months for breaking parole. This was a woman in need of a second chance. And she got one. She knows that most women aren't so lucky - which makes her all the more determined to succeed in her current project. Much of Bev Dwyer's time is spent caring for her elderly, infirm mother. But the rest of it is thrown into The Second Chance Foundation, her new baby. The goal is to provide support and training to women just out of prison.

But the first step is setting up a thrift store, which she plans to open in a strip mall in Scarborough by the end of May.

Rachel Matlow
CBC Radio
Apr 30, 2017

Restrict use of solitary confinement for mentally ill prisoners

Ontario needs to restrict the use of solitary confinement for mentally ill prisoners, says an interim report from an independent reviewer appointed by the province.

"Too many of those in segregation simply should not be held in such restrictive custody," Howard Sapers told reporters at Queen's Park.

"Segregation should not be the default to manage individuals with complex needs, including those with mental health issues, those at risk of self-harm or suicide, the disabled or the critically ill needing close medical supervision."

Sapers said he is recommending significant changes to solitary, urging the province to properly define what it is, and to eliminate indefinite segregation.

Sapers is not calling for a ban on segregation, but said it should not be longer for 15 days in a row or a total of 60 without proper review.

"(I have) certainly called for it to be rare and be exceptional," he said, adding the goal must be using least restrictive measure possible.

If his 63 recommendations are adopted, this would "catapult Ontario to the forefront" of correctional practices, he also said.

Last November, then-corrections minister David Orazietti ordered the far-reaching independent review of the system, including solitary confinement, after realizing during the government's own review months prior that a much more comprehensive look was needed.

Sapers, who served as Canada's correctional investigator and inmate ombudsman for more than a decade, was asked to find ways to reduce the use, duration and conditions of segregation and look at other options, especially for inmates suffering mental health issues. He was also tasked with looking at better training for staff.

The province has cut the number of days inmates can be held in solitary - from 30 to 15 days in a row - and says it can only be used as a last resort.

Solitary confinement became a hot issue because of Adam Capay, a 23-year-old who was placed alone in a windowless cell that was constantly lit for four years while awaiting trial for murder.

Roughly 7 per cent of Ontario's 8,000 inmates are held in segregation for safety or disciplinary reasons, and sometimes over medical concerns.

Those held for reasons other than discipline can be kept in solitary indefinitely.

In April, a separate report from the provincial ombudsman found "serious problems" with segregation, saying inmates weren't tracked properly and that the practice doesn't have a consistent definition among facilities, making it harder to collect data or produce reliable records.

Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services Marie-France Lalonde had said she would address all 32 of the ombudsman's recommendations, and that some progress is already under way.

Kristin Rushowy
Toronto Star
May 4, 2017

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**

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.



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 1:30-3 pm
Youth Now! – Mon 5-6:30 pm
- 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 – CFRO 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.

Women's Prison Network Summer 2017 - Issue #7

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

info@WomensPrisonNetwork.org

visit, download & print:
WomensPrisonNetwork.org

Send in your work
before Aug 1, 2017
Fall Issue #8 is sent
out Sep 1, 2017

PRISONERS JUSTICE DAY

∞ In Remembrance ∞

- August 10 -

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 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

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!

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

NOT
AVAILABLE
ONLINE !!!