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# Community Advisory Board Annual Report

## Ottawa-Carleton Detention Centre

Ottawa, Ontario

March 31, 2015

### Overview

The Ottawa Carleton Detention Centre (OCDC) Community Advisory Board (CAB) met for the first time on March 20, 2014. In 2014-15, CAB members made 16 site visits to OCDC. CAB members communicate on planned visits in advance in order to ensure coverage of the various areas and activities within the institution. These site visits were invaluable in terms of observing and learning about operations and working and inmate conditions, and being given the opportunity to speak with a variety of individuals including staff, volunteers, program personnel and inmates.

### OCDC CAB members

**Chair:** Meredith Porter, appointed Feb. 3, 2014, term Feb. 2., 2017

### Board Members:

Jeff Anderson, appointed Feb. 13, 2014, term Feb. 12., 2017

Julianne Dunbar, appointed Feb. 3, 2014, term Feb. 2., 2016

Rebecca Jesseman, appointed Feb. 10, 2014, term Feb. 9., 2017

Following the orientation, the CAB met once as a group off site, and a total of eight times at the institution. The CAB received eight reports from OCDC in 2014-15.

### Presentations

The CAB received six presentations on the following during regularly scheduled monthly meetings:

- Institutional programs
- Security
- Food and maintenance services
- Information and intelligence management
- Multicultural Institutional Liaison Officer program (MILO)
- Native Institutional Liaison Officer program (NILO)

CAB members also attended presentations held by two community organizations advocating for improved institutional conditions: the Criminalization and Punishment Education Project (CPEP) and the Mothers Offering Mutual Support (MOMS) program.

### Reports and concerns that required action

Concerns that arose from monthly reports were addressed as discussion items during monthly meetings. For example, the CAB expressed an interest in additional detail rather than simply an incident count. This was resolved by facility administration bringing incident report folders to monthly

meetings for CAB members to review. The CAB continues to work with the administration to determine how best to communicate institutional events in a way that is meaningful to members without creating undue work for OCDC staff.

### **Concerns directed to the Superintendent**

The CAB did not quantify concerns to the Superintendent of OCDC. Concerns were brought forward to the Superintendent during discussions at monthly meetings. Two noted issues that were brought to the attention of institutional administration were:

- Sub-standard food served to inmates.
- Sporadic access and large gaps in access to the yard for inmates.

### **Observations**

Many concerns identified in the course of institutional visits and dialogues with stakeholders were variations of central themes. It should be noted that the OCDC CAB is comprised of only four members and is anxious for the ministry to fill two vacancies. Other than the need to prioritize the replacement of CAB members in a timely manner, the CAB did not direct facility-related concerns to the Minister over the course of the year.

### **The Operation of the Institution**

#### **Staff shortages**

In the last five years, which includes the lifting of a moratorium on hiring in 2013, seven new correctional officers have been hired at OCDC, and four have transferred in from other institutions. However, shortages continue to put incredible pressure on staff and impact operations. Lock downs occur more frequently due to staff shortages, resulting in the cancellation of yard time, programs and family visits. In addition, correctional officers are working a great deal of overtime to compensate for the staff shortages.

#### **Support programs for OCDC staff**

Positive feedback was heard about the Critical Incident Stress Management team (CISM); a peer-to-peer initiative where staff talk to one another regarding incidents at OCDC that may be causing stress. A peer mentoring program at OCDC was also established to assist new recruits to integrate into their routines and the various procedures at the institution.

#### **Improvements to the OCDC**

The installation of 450 additional cameras inside and outside of the institution has been a welcome initiative.

### **Institution Impact on the Community**

#### **Negative impression in the community**

Staff are aware of the negative impression the community has of the work of correctional officers and the role they play in keeping communities safe. Negative news stories and legal action taken against a 'handful' of correctional officers in regards to alleged violent incidents has cast a dark shadow on staff.

#### **Positive comments and community involvement**

The Mothers Offering Mutual Support (MOMS) group advised the CAB that OCDC has an excellent person scheduling visits of loved ones and that these visits do go well. OCDC should be commended for their community involvement. Notable activities include the BBQ held for Jumpstart, a charity giving kids from families in financial need the opportunity to participate in sports, and its involvement in a Torch Run to support the Special Olympics.

### **Administration of the Institution**

#### **OCDC management/staff and the CAB**

OCDC Management has been responsive to the needs and requests of the CAB, and we can report a good relationship and level of cooperation. In addition, CAB members have found employees (correctional officers, medical, kitchen and administrative staff) to be very informative and resourceful.

For the most part, OCDC staff were willing to speak with CAB members, although there was a level of distrust displayed by some. This could be attributed to a general lack of awareness or understanding of the CAB and its role. The majority of correctional officers were forthright in discussions with CAB members over their concerns, and expressed genuine concern for inmates' well-being when describing what improvements they feel should be made. In many instances, correctional officers and inmates shared the same concerns.

#### **Labour relations**

In its first year, the CAB witnessed a deteriorating labour relations environment, which resulted in a protest rally outside the institution. CAB members have observed that a negative impression has been created by a lack of resources for many operational security, staffing and health and safety considerations, while significant resources have been invested in strike contingency planning.

#### **Volunteers and community resources**

Both staff and inmates are in agreement that the volunteers and groups such as Elizabeth Fry and the John Howard Society are committed and serve as a valuable resource to both the institution and inmates. Some community groups have indicated a willingness to volunteer time to support staff and inmates; however barriers associated with staff shortages and security concerns have prevented engagement with the institution.

#### **Use of Force; reporting requirements and frequency of investigations**

It has been reported that there is duplication in the paperwork required to report any use of force incident, and there seems to be an impact on staff becoming reluctant to physically intervene with inmates. This raises questions of losing authority or respect within the institution. The frequency and duration of use of force investigations have been raised as concerns by OCDC staff. It was reported to the CAB that this has led to increased stress. Staff have noted that post-incident debriefs have been helpful in dealing with these incidents.

#### **Community interest groups**

The community groups that the CAB met with raised issues of unacceptable living conditions, inadequate clothing and blankets, climate control, a violent and aggressive environment, unacceptable food, staff shortages, overcrowding and inadequate health services including, medical, dental, health assessment and psychological services limited to crisis management.

#### **Training**

OCDC staff raised a need for dedicated training in mental health with proper shift coverage to ensure that participation in training is possible. CAB members observed genuine concern on numerous occasions amongst the staff for the well-being of inmates whose mental illness or capacity makes them vulnerable.

## **Treatment of Inmates**

### **Mental health concerns**

An issue of great concern facing inmates at the institution is the number suffering from mental illness and the lack of services to recognize and address their particular needs. For OCDC staff, the issue is how to best deal with inmates with mental illness in an environment that is ill-equipped to deal with these concerns. Correctional officers do not feel they have the proper training to deal with mentally ill offenders, with the only available mechanism for high-risk, mentally ill offenders being segregation.

### **Genuine access to food and nutrition**

Concerns over access to good and nutritious food were raised from the outset. Several CAB members received anecdotal reports of serious quality and access issues. These concerns were echoed by family members and advocacy groups within the community. Complaints from inmates were most troubling and consistently focused on three main aspects:

1. **Quality:** Food quality is very bad, with food that is often soggy, spoiled or unpalatable. As a result, much of the food (65 to 90 per cent) is uneaten, even for more appetizing meals.
2. **Medical and food requirements:** The last meal of the day is served between 4:00 and 5:30 p.m. Without an evening snack, this can be a problem for inmates with diabetes or other blood sugar issues.
3. **Junk food canteen:** Lack of access to healthy and nutritious snacks at the canteen is a problem. Most of the items available are chips, chocolate bars and pop rather than more healthy and sustaining foods. It was noted that healthier items are available at other institutions.

The information provided by correctional officers, inmates and outside parties regarding the quality of food did not correspond to information obtained from the OCDC presentation on meals within the institution. While the actual operation of heating meals and compiling the meal tray was efficient, clean and well organized, it was readily apparent that meals themselves, other than the fresh fruit available that day, were far from acceptable by any standard.

Comments from staff and inmates regarding the impact of food quality included:

- Most inmates are constantly hungry, which effects sleep, discipline and mood.
- The lack of palatable food can lead to hoarding/commoditization of good food, which can lead to muscling and violence.
- Kitchen staff regularly receive shipments of food from the Cook-Chill facility in Milton that are spoiled, requiring staff to spend time documenting failures on the part of the contractor to meet its obligations to provide fresh food.

### **Overcrowding**

OCDC staff, inmates and CAB members have reported and observed that overcrowding is a major concern – particularly when intermittent offenders arrive on weekends – staff must shuffle inmates around, which creates tension among inmates. Inmates have commented about being three people to

one small cell with two bunks. This is the norm for intermittent offenders on the weekend, with the overflow placed on mats on the floor of a common room that could otherwise be used for programming.

### **Red Bag Program**

The Red Bag Program provides inmates with a 'red bag' containing personal identification, key, medical card, short term supply of medication and contact information for clinics in the community outside of Ottawa. Over time, it has been met with significant resistance by police transporting inmates to their court appearances. They are unwilling to accept ownership of these personal belongings. This causes problems when the inmate is released (into Cornwall, for example) and has no means to return to OCDC to retrieve their identification and personal belongings. This can have significant consequences, including breaching conditions and return to custody, if the offender does not have access to money or needed medications.

### **Overuse of inmate lockdowns and reduction in yard time**

Lockdowns are used regularly in order to manage staffing shortages. Reduction in yard time is a result of lockdowns. This has caused other issues to surface within the inmate population such as stress, anger, frustration, health issues, mental health and other complaints. Yard time was cancelled for up to two weeks at times. Under normal circumstances, inmates report that they get out two or three times per week for up to 20 minutes.

### **Access to medical personnel**

Inmates have reported that access to medical personnel has been problematic. That said, inmates are generally complementary of the nursing staff.

### **Resources for maintenance**

Given the age of the OCDC facility and its equipment, resources for general maintenance appear to be inadequate. As a result there is mould in the showers within the segregation unit and in surrounding air vents; and, showers have been "down" in some areas, resulting in 30 men sharing a single shower which only provided lukewarm water.

Inmates have requested cleaning supplies to clean up the mould, but none have been provided. CAB members were advised that cleaners were brought in to clean some cells, however inmates have reported that this involved workers painting over the mould without addressing the problem.

### **Intermittent inmates**

Intermittent inmates are to report at 5 p.m. on a Friday, but are often not admitted until approximately 7 – 8 p.m. This has been an issue in inclement weather.

### **Clothing and personal hygiene needs**

Inmates noted a need for clothing in all sizes and to ensure each size is accurately marked. CAB members have observed that in the middle of winter inmates go outside for yard time wearing summer footwear. Inmates are not provided hats due to sanitary concerns, although they are provided winter jackets before going outside.

Inmates advised of a lack of nail clippers, resulting in several inmates sharing the same set of clippers without the clippers being cleaned between uses, raising hygiene concerns. Inmates are also concerned that toothbrushes are too small. Finally, inmates raised concern about access to haircuts. It

is understood that inmates must pay for haircuts themselves, which leaves those without funds to shave their heads with razors.

### **Temperature**

Inmates in various areas of OCDC have commented that it is very cold in the winter. CAB members observed that temperatures in the facility ranged from being very cold in the maximum area to chilly in the women's dorms.

### **Lack of incentives**

Inmates are rewarded with chocolate bars for labour (i.e. kitchen or laundry work). Better incentives would promote good behaviour.

### **Programs**

Inmates advised CAB members that they "give up" on programs because they are offered sporadically, and often cancelled due to staff shortages and security issues. The women have a greater variety of programs and seem appreciative of them, although they noted that more structured programs would be beneficial as these programs relate to community integration.

Both correctional staff and inmates have commented on the value of having a "Nerf Ball" or something similar to toss around in the outside yard to encourage physical activity and improve well-being for the inmates.

### **Smoke**

Cigarette smoke from staff smoking near the entrance of the institution enters the living areas and is a frustration for inmates.

### **Consolidated list of recommendations**

4. It is recommended that the ministry address the serious issue of staff shortages.
5. It is recommended that the ministry address issues of wage increases.
6. It is recommended that a performance management system be instituted by OCDC to ensure annual performance assessments are completed for all staff.
7. It is recommended that the ministry make this Annual Report public.
8. It is recommended that a communications strategy be established to ensure OCDC communicates effectively with the community to provide factual information in a timely manner.
9. It is recommended that the ministry fill the two vacant positions on the OCDC CAB.
10. It is recommended that the ministry facilitate contact between the various CABs across the province.
11. It is recommended that OCDC ensure discussions take place with the telephone provider to explore improved phone service for inmates and families, friends and with professional service providers such as lawyers.
12. It is recommended that a specific training program be provided on how to deal with mentally ill inmates.
13. It is recommended that the ministry develop an action plan to deal with mentally ill inmates that would include more appropriate accommodation within the institution, or a more appropriate facility as well as follow up procedures to ensure mentally ill inmates have a proper release plan.
14. It is recommended that the ministry should undertake a review of its current Cook-Chill program to determine how best to improve or replace it as soon as possible so as to ensure that inmates are

served at minimum, palatable, unspoiled and nutritious meals that they will generally consume on a regular basis.

15. It is recommended that ministry officials find ways to require the Cook-Chill provider to meet its basic contractual obligations.
16. It is recommended that OCDC mitigate some of the current food and nutrition problems by ensuring that the Canteen offers a wide selection of more nutritious and healthy food products at reasonable prices.
17. It is recommended the ministry should recognize the systemic problem of overcrowding and take immediate action to relieve the burden that this places on provincial correctional institutions.
18. It is recommended that the ministry work with OCDC to explore ways to improve the acceptance level of the Red Bag Program.
19. It is recommended that strategies be implemented to reduce the amount of lockdowns and increase yard time for inmates.
20. It is recommended that the ministry review current staffing levels for medical personnel and increase as required.
21. It is recommended that the OCDC review present maintenance arrangements to ensure the noted structural deficiencies in the institution are addressed in a timely manner.
22. It is recommended that OCDC review inmate clothing requirement needs to ensure clothing in all sizes is available for inmates, and that clothing is appropriate for seasonal temperatures and weather conditions.
23. It is recommended that OCDC provide improved access to, and disinfecting of, personal grooming equipment.
24. It is recommended that better incentives for inmates be considered.
25. It is recommended that the ministry reinstate a physical activity program at OCDC. At a minimum, appropriate sports equipment should be permitted.

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October 27, 2015

Ms. Meredith Porter

Community Advisory Board Chair

Ottawa Carleton Detention Centre

Dear Ms. Porter:

Thank you for your submission of the Community Advisory Board (CAB) 2014 Annual Report for the Ottawa Carleton Detention Centre (OCDC).

The Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services' constant focus is on transforming Ontario's correctional system to improve staff and inmate safety, effective rehabilitation and reintegration programs, and strengthening of inmate mental health supports. Moving forward in these key areas is at the very core of building safer, stronger communities right across our province. We cannot do this without the commitment of individuals such as you and the other dedicated volunteers who make up our Community Advisory Boards. Your local perspective is invaluable to strengthening the links between our correctional facilities and communities.

I have reviewed your report and appreciate the thoughtful comments you have made about OCDC. You will be pleased to know, I have committed to releasing the Annual Reports beginning in 2015 in keeping with the ministry's commitment to openness, transparency, and community engagement.

Deputy Minister Stephen Rhodes will be responding in detail to each of the valuable recommendations you have made. Please accept my sincere thanks for this report, your work with the Superintendent, and your role in the community.

Sincerely,

Yasir Naqvi

Minister

**Ministry of Community Safety  
and Correctional Services**

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October 27, 2015

Ms. Meredith Porter

Community Advisory Board Chair

Ottawa Carleton Detention Centre

Dear Ms. Porter:

Thank you for your submission of the Community Advisory Board (CAB) 2014 Annual Report for the Ottawa Carleton Detention Centre (OCDC). The Annual Report has been reviewed by ministry staff and several recommended actions have been taken.

As the Honourable Yasir Naqvi, Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, noted in his letter to you, the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services' constant focus is on transforming Ontario's correctional system to improve staff and inmate safety, effective rehabilitation and reintegration programs, and strengthening of inmate mental health supports. Moving forward in these key areas is at the very core of building safer, stronger communities right across our province.

I am pleased to provide the following responses and recommended actions to the recommendations put forward in the OCDC CAB Annual Report:



**1. It is recommended that the ministry address the serious issue of staff shortages.**

The ministry has been actively recruiting correctional officers since March 2013. As a result, a total of 480 recruits have graduated from the Correctional Officer Training and Assessment (COTA) program at the Ontario Correctional Services College (OCSC) and 14 of these have been assigned to OCDC.

Recruitment is ongoing and we continue to hire and train new staff through the OCSC.

**2. It is recommended that the ministry addresses issues of wage increases.**

The negotiation of compensation for ministry employees falls under the jurisdiction of the Treasury Board Secretariat. Additionally, labour relations practices have been established in accordance with legislated requirements, including the Crown Employees Collective Bargaining Act, and in accordance with jointly negotiated collective agreements between Management Board of Cabinet and employee bargaining groups.

**3. It is recommended that a performance management system be instituted by OCDC to ensure annual performance assessments are completed for all staff.**

The Superintendent agrees with your recommendation and has developed an action plan for all employees at OCDC to ensure annual performance assessments are completed.

**4. It is recommended that the ministry make this Annual Report public.**

The Minister has committed to releasing the Annual Reports summary publicly beginning in 2015. The release and posting of the summary is in keeping with the ministry's commitment to openness, transparency, and community engagement. The ministry is currently reviewing the best options for the release and posting the summaries. Like any public release of information, it will need to be reviewed for personal and institutional security-related information. The 2014 reports will be formatted in plain language and posted on the ministry's website.

**5. It is recommended that a communications strategy be established to ensure the OCDC communicates effectively with the community to provide timely and factual information.**

CAB members and Superintendents will have an opportunity to explore some of the communications components related to CABs and the ministry communications process at the upcoming CAB conference in Ottawa on October 28, 2015.

**6. It is recommended that the ministry fill the two vacant positions on the OCDC CAB.**

The ministry recognizes the importance and benefit of local community engagement. The CAB plays an important role providing the Minister and ministry with its observations and recommendations. The ministry is currently in the process of expanding CABs into other correctional institutions. A total of seven institutions will have a CAB established by the end of 2015.

It is our goal to appoint new CAB members and fill CAB vacancies in a timely manner.

I am pleased that one of the two vacancies is being finalized. We are awaiting the results of enhanced security checks for candidates to fill the remaining vacancy.

**7. It is recommended that the ministry facilitate contact between the various CABs across the province.**

Contact and interaction between CAB members and CAB Chairs is strongly encouraged. This will assist CABs in implementing best practices between the boards, as well as the sharing of information and providing support to new CAB Chairs and newly established CABs.

When the Minister met with the CAB Chairs on April 20, 2015, a number of issues were discussed including communication and interaction between CABs. Quarterly teleconferences for the CAB chairs have been implemented and a first annual meeting of all CAB members is scheduled for October 28, 2015, in Ottawa.

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**8. It is recommended that OCDC ensure discussions take place with the phone provider to explore improved phone service for inmates and families, friends and professional services such as lawyers.**

Correctional Services recognizes that communication between inmates and members of the community is important for rehabilitation and successful reintegration into society.

Under the current system, inmates may call any person with a standard North American 10-digit telephone number who is capable of being billed for collect calls, providing the person is willing to accept the charges and the communication does not violate a court order, constitute an offence under federal or provincial statute, or jeopardize the safety of any person or the security of the institution.

Security measures are in place within the inmate telephone system as a safeguard. Correctional Services has adopted call blocking protocols to prevent inmates from contacting victims, witnesses, or other concerned citizens, by telephone, while incarcerated in Ontario correctional facilities. The three-way call blocking feature has also been implemented to support public safety and ministry security.

The service providers for telephone access are negotiated through a Vendor of Record for all provincial correctional institutions to meet these specific needs.

Any local concerns are addressed immediately by the Superintendent. Lawyers have access to dedicated blue telephones (Access Defence).

**9. It is recommended that a specific training program be provided on how to deal with mentally ill inmates.**

The ministry has developed training in conjunction with the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) to assist staff in understanding and responding to inmates with mental health challenges. This training will be provided to all frontline correctional staff and managers.

**10. It is recommended that the ministry develop an action plan to deal with mentally ill inmates that would include more appropriate accommodation within the institution or a more appropriate facility, as well as follow up procedures to ensure mentally ill inmates have a proper release plan (community referrals).**

We have introduced a new mental health screening and assessment process for all inmates upon admission, effective late September 2015. The new screening will ensure that inmates with mental health issues are identified as early as possible and referred to the appropriate professional(s) and services. Social workers, mental health nurses, and psychologists received training on the new process on June 24 and 25, 2015.

OCDC has a multi-disciplinary plan for all mentally ill inmates that includes discharge plans for returning to the community.

There are two mental health nurses dedicated to the mentally ill inmate population. OCDC staff attend the Human Services Justice Coordinating Committees for Champlain East, Renfrew County and Ottawa to ensure links with community partners.

The recruitment process is underway for two clinical positions (psychologist and social worker) in order to enhance services to the Female Unit. OCDC routinely classifies and refers sentenced male offenders to the Secure Treatment Unit in Brockville. This is a specialized facility for the assessment and treatment of male sentenced offenders suffering from a major mental illness. The ministry partners with a mental health service provider for the provision of clinical services for this high-needs population.

- 11. The ministry should undertake a review of its current Cook Chill program to determine how best to improve or replace it as soon as possible so as to ensure that inmates are served at minimum palatable unspoiled nutritious meals that they will generally consume on a regular basis.**

The ministry has a contract with Compass Group Canada (CGC) for the production and delivery of cook chill meals and the overall management of the Cook Chill Food Production Centre (CCFPC) in Milton.

The contract is for seven years with two possible one-year extensions. The sixth year of the contract commenced on April 1, 2015.

The ministry is now starting the process for the determination of a future food service model that will commence once the current contract has expired. To that end, the ministry is reviewing all options to ensure that the inmates under its care and custody receive meals that meet the Canada Food Guide to Healthy Eating for nutrition, portion size, dietary and religious requirements. The meals are to be served fresh and each of the meals has been tested for taste and texture before being placed on the menu.

- 12. Ministry officials should find ways to require the Cook Chill Canada provider to meet its basic contractual obligations.**

The ministry holds CGC accountable on a wide variety of performance metrics including, but not limited to, measures on food quality, quantity, portion size, nutritional content, safety and security, timely delivery and mandatory reporting. The contract is closely managed and performance closely monitored.

- 13. OCDC could and should mitigate some of the current problems by ensuring that the canteen offers a wide selection of more nutritious and healthy food products at reasonable prices.**

Regarding healthy canteen options, it is the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services' (MCSCS) policy to provide inmates with a balanced diet according to Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating prepared by Health Canada. All menus meet or exceed the Dietary Reference Intakes and contain all the nutrients for the promotion and maintenance of good health.

Menus and food portions are monitored regularly by the Senior Nutrition Consultant and the local Food Service Manager. Inmates are also able, where permitted, to purchase additional food items from the Vendor of Record providing canteen service.

We are striving to include more healthy options in the canteen for purchase and have made requests to the service provider to source the following types of canteen items including:

- healthier food choices;
- alternatives to deal with general food allergies; and
- no sugar added and/or sugar-reduced products.

We have recently added some new canteen items that have no sugar added and/or are sugar reduced. Some examples of healthier snack options available for purchase are vegetable cocktail and oatmeal.

**14. The ministry should recognize the systemic problem of overcrowding and take immediate action to relieve the burden that this places on provincial correctional institutions.**

The ministry continues to review institution operational requirements, and develop strategies to assist with capacity pressures. Recent initiatives include:

- The commissioning of the Toronto Intermittent Centre (TIC) in 2013 to house intermittent inmates. This institution has 320 beds and is located on the same site as the Toronto South Detention Centre (TSDC).
- The commissioning of the 1650-bed TSDC in January 2014.
- The commissioning of the South West Detention Centre (SWDC) in Windsor. SWDC is a 315-bed facility.
- A Regional Intermittent Centre (RIC) which is being constructed on the grounds of Elgin Middlesex Detention Centre.

The Superintendent confirms that OCDC operates at approximately 95 per cent capacity during the week. However, on weekends they are above capacity due to increased admission as well as the high number of intermittent offenders (40 to 50 males and 10 to 12 females).

Steps taken to manage capacity include: sentenced inmates are classified and transferred twice weekly; the Intermittent Community Work Program (ICWP) generally has between 40 to 50 male inmates and two female inmates on the program weekly. Most triple bunking occurs on the weekend when OCDC is operating above capacity, largely due to new admits and intermittent offenders.

OCDC administration regularly attends Bench and Bar meetings in Ottawa that includes discussions with court officials and defense council about issues related to the high remand population. OCDC also meets regularly with Justice on Target in order to assist the courts with lawyers visits, video conferences for lawyers as well as Access Defence (blue phones on each unit for direct access to lawyers only).

**15. It is recommended that the ministry work with OCDC to explore ways to improve the acceptance level of the Red Bag Program.**

The Superintendent reports that the Red Bag Program has been re-implemented through collaboration and the cooperation of the key stakeholders. The ministry is exploring ways to expand the use of this program.

**16. It is recommended that strategies be implemented to reduce the amount of lockdowns and to increase yard time for inmates.**

The safety and security of both staff and inmates is a top priority. Lockdowns do occur to ensure the safety and security of both staff and inmates. Lockdowns occur due to a variety of reasons, including staff shortages, which sometimes result from a combination of vacation leaves, sick leaves and other leaves taking place at the same time. Every effort is made to maintain the regular schedule of visits, programming and other services and when a lockdown is required, partial or individual unit lockdowns are always preferred to a facility lockdown.

The ministry has been actively recruiting correctional officers since March 2013 once the moratorium on recruitment was lifted. As a result, a total of 480 recruits have graduated from the COTA program at the OCSC and 14 were assigned to OCDC.

Recruitment is ongoing and we continue to hire and train new staff through the OCSC.

**17. It is recommended that the ministry review the current staffing levels for medical personnel and increase as required.**

OCDC has now recruited an Assistant Health Care Manager and two full-time nurses.

Compensation impacts on the ability to attract and retain nurses. Health Care departments in correctional facilities typically experience high turn-over rates given the competition offered by preferred settings such as hospital and community-based environments.

**18. It is recommended that the OCDC review present maintenance arrangements to ensure the noted deficiencies are addressed in a timely manner.**

All inmates in provincial institutions are responsible for cleaning their area. Each unit has a cleaner to ensure cleanliness outside the cells.

OCDC is in the process of organizing an inmate cleaning crew, through the work board process, to address the cleanliness of the corridors. The maintenance department is currently recruiting for maintenance personnel.

Staff shortages in this department have impacted on timely responses to maintenance requests which are prioritized according to health and safety requirements.

**19. It is recommended that OCDC review the clothing requirement needs to ensure clothing in all sizes for inmates and clothing that is appropriate for seasonal temperatures and weather conditions.**

OCDC is currently reviewing all inmates clothing to ensure adequate supplies that address sizes as well as seasonal needs such as winter clothing and footwear.

**20. It is recommended that OCDC provide improved access to and disinfecting of personal grooming equipment.**

Items have been actioned and processes have been implemented to improve access and ensure hygiene requirements are met. A new service provider for disinfectant has been secured.

**21. It is recommended that better incentives for inmates be considered.**

OCDC is reviewing alternative options for incentives for inmate workers other than food. These include additional visits and/or increase to mail privileges.

**22. It is recommended that the ministry reinstate a physical activity program at OCDC. At a minimum, appropriate sports equipment should be permitted.**

The Superintendent and Regional Office are supportive of physical activity for inmates.

OCDC is exploring program options that would increase physical activities.

I appreciate the CAB indicating in its Annual Report OCDC success stories, such as the community support provided by OCDC staff to the Jump Start Program and the Torch Run for Special Olympics. I am also pleased to see the positive feedback about the Critical Incident Stress Management Team

(CISM). This peer-to-peer initiative seems to be well appreciated within the institution, as well as the peer mentoring program established at OCDC to assist new recruits to integrate into the institution after completing their initial training at the OCSC.

Thank you for the work that you do and the role you play as volunteer members of the Community Advisory Board. Please be assured that the ministry values your input and recommendations. Your commitment and dedication is admirable and your positive working relationship with management and staff at the OCDC is commendable. I am looking forward to your ongoing support as we further this very important work.

Sincerely,

Stephen Rhodes

Deputy Minister of Correctional Services

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