

# Community Advisory Board Annual Report 2016

## Ottawa-Carleton Detention Centre

Ottawa, Ontario

March 29, 2017

### Preface

#### Legislative Authority

*Ministry of Correctional Services Act, Section 14.1, 2000, c.40, s.4.*

"The Minister may establish a local monitoring board for a correctional institution, composed of persons appointed by the Minister."

#### Principal Duties of the Community Advisory Board

- To satisfy themselves as to the state of the institution premises, the administration of the institution, and the treatment of inmates
- To develop effective relationships with the Superintendent and share minutes from the Board meetings
- To inquire into and report back on any matters requested by the minister
- To direct to the attention of the Superintendent any matter they consider expedient to report, and
- To report to the minister any matter which they consider expedient to report, normally achieved through the Annual Report or through exceptional situation reports.

#### Overview of the Annual Report

One of the required functions of the Community Advisory Board (CAB) is to develop and submit an annual report outlining and describing the Board's activities of the previous year. The report will also contain observations and recommendations to the Minister, Community Safety and Correctional Services (MCSCS), on aspects of the operation of the institution.

The annual report is submitted to the minister, with distribution to the institution superintendent. The annual report or excerpts may only be made public with the approval of the minister.

#### Objectives of the Annual Report

The purpose of the annual report is to highlight the work of the CAB and to identify any areas of concern and/or support for the operation of the institution. The annual report should include observations, findings and recommendations in the following areas:

- Advice to the minister on any aspect of the operation of the institution;
- Any observations communicated to the superintendent regarding the operation of the institution;
- Advice provided to the minister and superintendent regarding a community or citizens perspective on the operation of the institution;
- Observations communicated to the minister and superintendent, regarding the treatment of inmates in the care of the institution;
- Observations on the state of the institution and the administration of the facility; and

- The establishment of cooperative and supportive relationships with the superintendent, managers and staff of the institution.

## Objectives and Goals

To make observations and recommendations to the Minister, Community Safety and Correctional Services (MCSCS), on aspects of the operation, administration and treatment of inmates at OCDC.

## Community Advisory Board Members

**Chair:** Rebecca Jesseman, Feb. 10, 2014 - Feb. 9, 2019, Chair Dec. 2016 - present  
Meredith Porter, Feb. 3, 2014 - Feb. 2, 2017, Chair Feb. 2014 - Dec. 2016

### Board Members:

Jeff Anderson, Feb. 13 2014 - Feb. 12 2017  
Julianne Dunbar, Feb. 3 2014 - Feb. 2 2017  
Genevieve Boudreau, Oct. 22, 2015 - Oct. 21, 2018  
Hamid Challal, Oct. 28, 2016 - Oct. 27, 2019  
Hawa Mohamed, March 24, 2016 - March 23, 2019

## Overview of CAB Activities for 2016

**Number of CAB Meetings:** 10

### Summary

The CAB met on-site at OCDC monthly with the exception of July, August, and December. The CAB also held one off-site meeting in July.

**Number of Site Visits:** CAB members conducted site visits on approximately a monthly basis. In some cases visits were conducted in pairs; however, most were conducted individually, resulting in approximately 50 visits over the course of the year.

### Summary

CAB members visited all parts of the institution over the course of the year. We spoke with service providers such as the Multicultural Institutional Liaison Officer, Native Institutional Liaison Officer, and community volunteers, correctional officers, management, sergeants, administrative staff, kitchen staff, health services staff, and inmates. The observations made and issues brought forward are summarized in the remainder of this report.

**Monthly Reports provided to the CAB:** The Superintendent and management representatives provided reports orally at each on-site CAB meeting.

**Number of Reports/Concerns that Required Action:** The CAB did not quantify the actions required to address the broad range of reports and concerns that may have required action. Rather, the qualitative details of these concerns are addressed in the body of this report.

**Number of Concerns Directed to the Superintendent:** All concerns raised in this report were voiced to the Superintendent during CAB meetings.

### Summary

As noted above.

**Number of Concerns Directed to the Minister:** The CAB raised concerns in the four areas noted below.

## Summary

### Concerns Raised Previously

The CAB is concerned that several recommendations from 2014 and 2015 remain outstanding. While there have been several positive initiatives this past year such as the Task Force and the commencement of a Segregation Review, there remains a lot to be done. Significant change is still required in order to meet the system-level needs that have been identified.

### Task Force Report

The OCDC CAB had the opportunity to communicate a broad range of concerns through representation on the Minister's Task Force. The CAB supports all recommendations included in the Task Force report. The majority of these recommendations raised concerns that were reflected in the previous CAB reports, including food quality, access to programs, the phone program, access to counsel, crowding, staff shortages, and health care.

### Communications Strategy

In addition to these recommendations, the CAB again raised the need for improved communications from the ministry in order to proactively address events at the institution resulting in negative media coverage, and to promote coverage of positive events – as raised in both the 2014 and 2015 reports.

The CAB recognizes and applauds the ministry for inviting local media to tour the facility in conjunction with the release of the first Task Force progress report in October. The positive accounts of progress made on the Task Force recommendations demonstrated a notable shift in the tone of coverage, and in the perceptions of external stakeholders of both the institution and the ministry.

However, in general the reactive and/or silent nature of ministry responses to negative media coverage of operational activities and events results in the perception that the ministry is not able or willing to take accountability for its policies and practices, or to defend the reputation of its staff. This is damaging to staff morale.

The CAB again recommends that the ministry develop a proactive communications strategy that promotes a more balanced coverage of activities and events at OCDC through a more proactive and transparent approach.

### CAB Report Release

The CAB acknowledges that the 2015 report was released in August versus the 2014 report which was released in October. However, the CAB recommends that the ministry continue to work toward a more immediate release of the annual report submitted at the end of March.

### Conditions of Confinement

The CAB had the opportunity to meet the minister at OCDC in September 2016. Several concerns regarding the conditions of confinement for inmates in segregation and the policies and practices with respect to strip searches were raised during that meeting. The CAB spoke to the minister regarding the need for all inmates to be provided with suitable living conditions including a mattress in the segregation cell at all times, continued access to yard time and professional visits, access to a phone, and regularly scheduled showers.

The CAB cited the need for ministry reform of policies pertaining to strip searches conducted within the institution. The CAB echoed concerns regarding the routine approach to strip searches as opposed to searches conducted once risk has been identified. The CAB reiterated the need for searches to be conducted in a private setting as opposed to in an open dorm- setting, including that searches should never be conducted in the presence of a group of staff members.

## **Presentations and Training**

### **Number of Presentations made to the CAB: 1**

#### **Summary**

The MILO and NILO attended CAB meetings but did not make formal presentations. Two CAB Members attended the all-CAB Annual Meeting in Toronto on November 2, 2016.

### **Number of Training Sessions Completed: 2**

#### **Summary**

The two new CAB members went through the standard training/orientation process.

## **Observations**

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

#### **Staffing Levels**

Over the course of 2016, OCDC created 84 new correctional officer positions. The CAB recognizes the value of increased staffing in facilitating adequate shift coverage, thereby increasing inmates' access to institutional programs and services, reducing the impact of overtime on staff and their families, and increasing the ability of staff to participate in training programs. The CAB does understand, however, that retention of new recruits continues to be a challenge, and recommends the development of a comprehensive recruitment - and particularly retention - strategy in order to ensure that qualified recruits remain on staff.

The CAB has also heard continued concern about the need to increase staffing at the Sergeant level to avoid frequent situations where Sergeants are having to cover multiple areas of the institution during their shifts.

#### **Health Care**

The CAB continued to hear significant concerns about health care capacity and quality at the institution. Staffing shortages contribute to inadequate nursing coverage, particularly on weekends. There are often no health care staff overnight. Effective and efficient record-keeping is a challenge due to paper-based systems and the need to balance service delivery with administrative tasks. There are also no on-site psychology services on the weekend or evenings. The CAB recognizes that the ministry conducted a health care review during the year, and that improvements, including increased staff, are underway. The details of the review have not, however, been released. The CAB also strongly reiterates the Task Force recommendation that the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care provide health care services in the institution, reflecting best practice in the field. Alberta and Nova Scotia have integrated health care services in this way and can provide models and lessons learned.

#### **Cleaning**

The institution underwent a comprehensive cleaning and painting process in 2016. Development and implementation of an ongoing enhanced cleaning strategy is part of the Task Force recommendations, and is strongly supported by the CAB as essential to increased quality of conditions for both staff and inmates. The lack of consistent, regular cleaning continues to be a concern. It is the understanding of the CAB that two full-time staff are responsible for day-to-day cleaning within the institution common areas, although one staff member has been absent due to personal circumstances. In addition, inmates are given cleaning supplies in order to attend to their cells and dorm areas. Finally, the CAB understands that there is a contract cleaning company that comes in once per week, and that can be called in when required. However, based on the CAB's direct observations as well as input from various sources in the institution, a more comprehensive and consistent approach to cleaning is necessary. The CAB therefore recommends that the full-time cleaning staff be increased and that cleaning be conducted on weekends and evenings as well as regular business hours to the extent possible. An increase in cleaning personnel will provide for a more comprehensive and regular cleaning schedule to be adhered to, which is also in alignment with the Task Force recommendations and ministry commitment to implementation.

Several staff have raised the need for improved cleaning following incidents involving the removal of bodily waste from cell walls, floors and doorways. This is often left to the Correctional Officers, or inmates who are willing, to clean. However, in the interest of the health and well-being of both inmates and Correctional Officers, this should be done by professional cleaners who have the proper training, equipment, and sanitizing products.

### **Transfers**

The new transfer process, in which inmates with lengthy remand periods are sent to other facilities (primarily Lindsay) has resulted in a sustained reduction in numbers. This reduction has noticeably decreased tension among both inmates and staff. The CAB recognizes efforts made by ODC administration to ensure that the transfer process is fair, and recommends that the criteria for transfers continue to be transparent and to minimize impact on contact with legal counsel and family.

### **Food Carts**

The CAB heard several concerns about both the cost and functionality of the heated meal carts. Size, weight, and maneuverability were noted in particular.

### **Discipline**

Correctional Officers and Sergeants have expressed concern about the lack of tools available to them to ensure an orderly and safe institution for inmates and staff. The changes to the "use of force" policies have resulted in an increased reporting burden. There is a significant time investment in ensuring that the required paperwork is completed for each use of force incident; impacting the time available to monitor the institution and perform other tasks.

The CAB heard additional concerns with regard to the reduction in access to segregation for disciplinary purposes. The CAB recognizes that the Ministry is undertaking a review of segregation policy and practice, and highlights the need to develop solutions that respect both security needs and inmate rights. The CAB also heard concern about the lack of space available to move inmates for security purposes when temporary solutions are required to address immediate situations. Overall, the CAB has observed frustration among staff with regard to perceived lack of authority to effectively and efficiently do their jobs due to increased levels of scrutiny and administrative requirements associated

with use of force and segregation policies. The CAB supports a system that ensures accountability, but also suggests that the current processes and paperwork be reviewed for opportunities to streamline and achieve greater efficiency.

## **Security**

The installation of the new camera system continues.

A new body scanner has been added to the Admissions & Discharge section of the institution. This is a welcome addition to detect and prevent contraband from entering the institution. OCDC may wish to consider purchasing special toilets which are used by CBSA and other police agencies, in addition to the dry cells already being used, to collect the contraband and take appropriate follow-up action.

## **Institution Impact on the Community**

### **Visits**

The CAB understands that concerns expressed in earlier reports with regards to cancellation of visits have largely been addressed through the increase in staffing.

### **Support for Colleagues**

The CAB was saddened to hear of the involvement of a new staff member in a tragic traffic accident this year. We would like to note the efforts of OCDC staff to provide support for their colleague's family during an extremely difficult time.

### **Community Involvement in the Task Force**

The CAB recognizes the Ministry for engaging community representatives in the work of the Task Force.

### **CAB Interaction with Community Groups**

CAB members have continued to be engaged with interested groups such as Elizabeth Fry, John Howard Society, CPEP and the MOMS group. The CAB considers this type of outreach important to better understand the concerns of those with loved ones in the institution or those agencies who are assisting or advocating on behalf of inmates.

### **Community Programming**

The CAB is concerned that volunteers who give freely of their time to run programs at OCDC are experiencing barriers to delivering programs, and receiving unclear and inconsistent communication from staff and management. Further explanation of the issues as they pertain to programming is described below.

### **Media Coverage**

As has been recommended in both 2014 and 2015 reports, OCDC should be assigned a local communications authority to be able to ensure a proactive versus reactive media approach. It is important that OCDC is able to articulate positive information to the community, correct factual misconceptions when they arise or provide the institutional perspective to any given incident, while respecting privacy where required.

## **Administration of the Institution**

### **Institutional Leadership**

OCDC experienced a sudden change of leadership in 2016, which is disruptive to any organization. The CAB recognizes that building a positive, professional, proactive rapport with new management takes time and patient effort on the part of all involved. The CAB would like to see improved communications with OCDC management so that CAB members are advised of serious incidents by management instead of learning about them through the media. There is a need for the concerns of CAB members that are shared with management to be acknowledged and addressed in a meaningful and timely way.

### **Training and Professional Development**

The CAB recognizes that gaps in staff training experienced in 2016 have been addressed with the end of the labour dispute in January 2016, and the subsequent increases in staffing levels. The CAB particularly recognizes the Ministries' fulfillment of its commitment to provide all staff with mental health training in order to recognize and address mental health concerns among inmates. However, the CAB also understands that the training provided was at a basic level that does not respond to the heightened complexity of mental health needs experienced by many inmates at OCDC. Enhanced training should be considered for a targeted group of qualified and interested staff. A pool of specially trained staff could reduce operational and interpersonal challenges associated with working with inmates who have significant mental health needs.

Note that recommendations with regard to better addressing offenders' mental health needs are also a part of the Task Force report, and are reflected in the Treatment of Inmates section below. The CAB has also heard concerns about cultural diversity and cultural awareness among staff. Recruitment efforts to recruit staff reflecting the cultural diversity of the institution would be beneficial, as would training in cultural competence.

In the 2014 and 2015 Annual Reports the CAB recommended that a performance management system be instituted by OCDC to ensure annual performance assessments are completed for all staff. This is critical to effective management. Staff deserve to be advised through a proper performance evaluation process if their performance is above average, satisfactory, or in need of improvement. Such systems are an effective way to manage talent and provide for the tools to improve where performance is lacking in certain areas. In the October 27, 2015 response by the ministry to the CAB's 2014 Annual Report, it was noted that the "Superintendent agrees with your recommendation and has developed an action plan for all employees at OCDC to ensure annual performance assessments are completed." However, the CAB understands that performance assessments are still not being completed. We reiterate our recommendation for the development and implementation of an action plan to ensure assessments are completed.

### **Staff Support**

Correctional staff operate in a high-stress environment, and are subject to involvement in and witnessing of violent and potentially traumatic incidents and behaviour. Under Bill 163, passed in April 2016, correctional officers are officially recognized as first responders, facilitating expedited claims for Workplace Safety and Insurance Board coverage for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. The CAB reiterates our 2015 recommendation to provide staff with training supportive of preventing, recognizing, and addressing mental health concerns at the individual level and among colleagues. The CAB recognizes the presence of the CISM team to provide debriefing to staff following serious incidents. However, these debriefs are often delayed by several days following the event, are conducted via phone call, and are extremely brief. The CAB is concerned that this approach does not

provide sufficient depth of support in a timely way, and recommends that it be subjected to an external expert review for alignment with best practice in post-incident support. The CAB also recommends that existing workplace wellness programs be reviewed and enhanced where possible.

### **Morale**

Staff morale is a significant concern for the CAB as it impacts the operation of the institution, including security and the treatment of inmates. CAB members have heard concerns that some staff feel that when a crisis emerges and critical decisions are required, they are not confident of support from senior management when facing later scrutiny. Concerns have been raised that Correctional Officers and Sergeants do not have a voice in the operation of the institution. While workplace morale is the responsibility of each and every employee in the institution, it falls on senior management to devise an action plan to improve morale. The CAB therefore recommends that OCDC senior management ensure that there is a proper action plan to ensure better communication at all levels. This recommendation is not meant to suggest that senior management is not making an effort in this regard, but the concerns heard indicate that more needs to be done to ensure that staff feel valued and informed regarding management decisions.

### **OCDC Task Force**

The CAB recognizes that OCDC administration has made many accomplishments in supporting the work of the Ministerial Task Force, including the implementation of short-term recommendations. The CAB promotes continued work toward implementation of mid- and long- term recommendations, as well as maintenance of accomplishments to date.

### **CAB Access and Information**

The CAB recognizes the posting of inmate information sheets that outline rights and processes such as yard, canteen, visits, and requests, as well as information sheets specifically providing information about the CAB program. The CAB also recognizes OCDC administration for preparing a request form that inmates can fill out in order to speak with CAB members, as well as a mail slot for CAB correspondence. This process has greatly facilitated dialogue with male inmates. The CAB intends to work with the administration in 2017 in order to improve opportunities for dialogue with female inmates; for example by ensuring that females are aware of the request forms and that completed forms are transported to the CAB mail slot.

The CAB recognizes that we have not had sufficient opportunity to hear from the Sergeants, and welcomed participation in a Sergeant's meeting on November 28, 2016. We hope to continue to increase our engagement with the Sergeants at OCDC in the coming year and have extended a standing offer for Sergeant representation to attend the CAB's monthly meetings to ensure that their perspective is heard and they are part of the dialogue between the CAB and the institution.

The CAB notes that it is beneficial to communicate with and have representation from all perspectives at the monthly on-site meetings, including senior management, sergeants, and the union.

### **Wages**

The CAB heard concern about the requirement for new staff to pay back a portion of their wages at the beginning of the year; a particular concern given existing retention challenges. The



CAB also heard concerns about the need to look at wage parity for Sergeants due to wage freezes. The CAB recommends that the ministry look at wage and compensation policies with a view to ensuring parity and efficacy in securing and retaining qualified staff at all levels.

### **Data Collection and Reporting**

The CAB continues to hear concerns about the time required to complete paperwork across the institution. We reiterate our previous recommendation that the Ministry and institution eliminate the archaic approach to recordkeeping currently in place. The paper-based system results in incomplete information and increases the administrative burden on all staff. It prevents timely access to information and analysis that could enhance operational performance.

### **The Treatment of Inmates**

#### **Mental Health**

CAB members regularly heard concerns about and directly observed the distress of inmates with mental health conditions. These inmates are unable to function in the general population and are therefore frequently housed for extended periods in segregation. OCDC is a remand institution and is not equipped to meet the significant needs of these individuals from either a physical or programming perspective; resulting in aggravation rather than reduction of conditions and symptoms. The CAB recognizes the efforts of staff who do their best with the limited training and resources available. However, more must be done at the Ministry and system level to provide an appropriate response to individuals with significant mental health needs. The CAB notes the appointment of an independent investigator to review the use of segregation, and sincerely hopes that the results will produce meaningful and timely change.

#### **Health Care**

The CAB is hopeful that the recent health care review will result in actions that will increase the efficacy and efficiency of the health care available to inmates. Continuity of care is a vital part of addressing the physical and mental health needs of inmates. However, we continue to hear concerns regarding the existing standard of care experienced by inmates, and the operational challenges faced by the medical staff due to lack of resources. CAB members are particularly concerned with the inconsistent delivery of medication. Inconsistent delivery of methadone, for example, results in agitation and anxiety with the onset of withdrawal symptoms, which can cause behavioural as well as health concerns; and the CAB also notes the importance of effectively addressing problematic substance use as a criminogenic risk factor.

Inmates have expressed numerous concerns about access to medical professionals including doctors, optometrists and dentists. Concerns have also been raised that the medical professionals are not taking inmates' concerns seriously and consistently feel rushed and not listened to during doctor visits. In addition, concerns have been raised about unproductive medical visits due, for example, to test results missing from files, requiring additional follow-up visits and contributing to delays in treatment. The medical filing system desperately needs to be brought up to date, ideally through the use of electronic records that reflect the standard in the field.

As the issue of health care has been raised in all reports submitted to date, the CAB urges OCDC management to devise an action plan to correct this situation in a timely way. An increase in nursing staff and streamlining of the record-keeping system will assist in part to address this problem.

#### **Food**

The quality of the cook-chill food, including taste, nutritional value, and freshness, continues to be a consistent concern expressed by inmates. The CAB notes that the institution has begun to monitor the food returned to the kitchen uneaten, and hopes that this will be used to inform discussions with the service provider, and decisions about the continuation of the current contract.

## **Canteen**

The CAB recognizes that the Ministry has added more items to the canteen list; however, we continue to hear requests for access to more healthy food items to supplement the meals provided as well as a greater variety of hygiene products. Canteen items are also frequently higher cost than equivalent items on the outside. The ability to purchase food and hygiene products in larger quantities may introduce an opportunity for lower prices through scale.

## **Programming**

Presently, programming at OCDC is provided in large part by community volunteers. The CAB has observed several concerns as it relates to community volunteer programs. First, there have been repeated concerns raised about the Deputy of Programming being unresponsive to emails regarding programming. For example, a newly formed Muslim Program was started this year and initially there were several volunteers who were interested and who had passed security clearance. However, a lack of organisation and slow response time to get the program off the ground discouraged several volunteers who ended up giving up as they felt their time was not being valued. Misplaced security clearance applications, difficulty in scheduling of the program, and concerns over volunteers being turned away when they arrive at OCDC to deliver the program, at times for reasons that appear less legitimate than others, have not created an environment that is encouraging of volunteer programming. Better organisation is required in developing the lists of inmates who wish to participate and communicating the times and importance of programming to Correctional Officers is required in order for the programming to be a success. For example, CAB members have observed that several inmates arrive at programming unaware of what they are even attending. In a Christian program, a CAB member observed that 4 of the 6 inmates were Muslim and the reverse also happens where many Christians are sent to Muslim programming, unaware of what they have signed up for. In addition, at times only a fraction of those who signed up for a program are in fact brought out to participate.

The CAB recommends that senior management work to improve the volunteer programming at OCDC. First and foremost, volunteers' time should be valued by ensuring timely responses to emails in an effort to ensure the smooth operation of programs. Secondly, better care needs to be taken in developing the list of attendees for programs and ensuring proper communication to inmates on what programming is available. Thirdly, senior management should reinforce the importance to Correctional Officers of bringing inmates who have signed up for programming. Since volunteers are giving of their free time to deliver programming, it should not be up to the volunteers to constantly follow up with the Deputy of Programming in order to ensure delivery. These programs have the potential to assist inmates both in the institution and especially upon release where volunteers can assist by establishing positive contacts in the community. As such, more emphasis by senior management needs to be given to volunteer programs to ensure they are a success.

## **Immigration Holds**

The CAB has observed that provincial correctional institutions such as OCDC are not appropriate places for immigration detainees. These are often people without criminal records and should not be housed in the same manner as inmates accused of criminal offences. The CAB recommends that the Ministry look at alternative arrangements for housing immigration detainees.

## **Indigenous Inmates**

Programming for indigenous inmates improved in the latter part of the year. There was increased opportunity for smudging offered to indigenous inmates, and the NILO successfully constructed a sweat lodge. Weekly sweats began in late October. Art supplies were donated for programming with indigenous inmates, however, at the conclusion of the year the supplies had still not been cleared for use.

peoples and recommended that feasts become part of the programming delivered to indigenous inmates, both men and women. To date, no feasts have been held or planned at the institution.

## **Cleanliness and Hygiene**

In both the 2014 and 2015 CAB reports, a recommendation has been made that OCDC provide access to, and disinfecting of, personal grooming equipment such as tweezers and nail clippers. Nail clippers and tweezers are shared between several inmates and inmates have to repeatedly requested that they be properly sanitized between uses. A sufficient number of tweezers and nail clippers should be purchased and after each and every use they should be properly disinfected to ensure there are no hygiene related issues.

## **Phones**

The OCDC phone system continues to be unsatisfactory, which is particularly problematic given the recognized importance of continued contact with external supports in successful reintegration. Phone rates are exorbitant, calls are frequently dropped, and family members are required to pay to maintain land-lines because calls to cell phones are not permitted. The CAB reiterates the recommendation of the Task Force to revisit the phone system, and emphasizes the need to do so as soon as possible.

## **Summary of Recommendations to the Ministry**

1. The ministry release the annual report submitted at the end of March in a timely manner.
2. Communications between CAB members and OCDC management be enhanced to ensure that the CAB is advised of incidents at the institution in a timely way.
3. The CAB continue to improve communication with all groups in the institution, with a focus on female inmates and Sergeants.
4. The recommendations of the Task Force continue to be implemented.
5. The ministry explore alternative options to OCDC for immigration detainees.
6. The ministry and institution respond in a timely and meaningful way to the recommendations of the health care and segregation reviews.
7. The ministry develop a proactive communications strategy that promotes a more balanced coverage of activities and events at OCDC through a more proactive and transparent approach.
8. The ministry and institution implement an improved and preferably electronic records and data management system to improve timeliness and accuracy of information.
9. A comprehensive recruitment and retention strategy be implemented to ensure that qualified recruits remain on staff.
10. The ministry look at wage and compensation policies with a view to ensuring parity and efficacy in securing and retaining qualified staff at all levels.
11. Staffing at the Sergeant level be increased.
12. A performance management system including annual performance reports be implemented.
13. Senior management ensure effective two-way communication with staff.

14. Staff be provided with training supportive of preventing, recognizing, and addressing mental health concerns at the individual level and among colleagues.
15. Enhanced mental health training be provided to interested and qualified staff in order to enhance capacity to deal with inmates who present with complex needs.
16. The current CISM approach be reviewed to ensure alignment with best practice in post-incident support.
17. Workplace wellness programs be reviewed for opportunities to enhance well-being and morale.
18. Enhanced responsiveness to the cultural diversity of OCDC inmates through recruitment efforts and training.
19. Health care resources be enhanced to ensure adequate shift coverage, and quality of care, including consistent delivery of medication, and timely and effective appointments.
20. Health care record-keeping be revised to improve efficiency and clear the existing filing backlog.
21. Access to psychology services be increased, including on-site access on weekends.
22. OCDC management actively support and ensure access to volunteer-led programs for inmates, including timely communication with volunteers and provision of information to inmates regarding program availability.
23. Programs for Indigenous inmates continue to develop, including feasts as part of culturally appropriate programming.
24. Full-time cleaning staff be increased and that cleaning services also be conducted on weekends and evenings as required.
25. A comprehensive cleaning strategy be developed and implemented.
26. Cleaning to remove bodily waste be conducted within 24 hours by professionals with appropriate training, equipment, and sanitizing products.
27. Administrative requirements associated with use of force and segregation be reviewed with a view to increasing efficiency while maintaining accountability.
28. Strip-search protocols be reviewed and revised as necessary to ensure respect for privacy; and in particular, to ensure that strip searches are not conducted in an open setting.
29. OCDC and the ministry look into customized toilets for the collection of contraband following detection by the new body scanner.
30. The quality of the meals provided continue to be evaluated and improved.
31. The phone system be replaced with a more affordable alternative that is not dependent on land lines.
32. The availability and affordability of canteen items be improved, particularly healthy food choices and hygiene products.
33. A sufficient number of tweezers and nail clippers be purchased and properly disinfected after each and every use.

## **Appendix**

### **List of Attachments**

N/A

Submitted March 31 2016

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Rebecca Jesseman, Chair

**Ministry of Community Safety  
and Correctional Services****Ministère de la Sécurité communautaire  
et des Services correctionnels**

Office of the Minister

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June 20, 2017

Ms. Rebecca Jesseman  
Chair, Community Advisory Board  
Ottawa-Carleton Detention Centre

Dear Ms. Jesseman:

Thank you for your submission of the 2016 Community Advisory Board (CAB) Annual Report for the Ottawa-Carleton Detention Centre. This letter confirms our receipt of the Annual Report for 2016.

We truly appreciate all of the time you and your fellow CAB members give each year to this program. The Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services values all of the work you put into the Annual Report, providing us with a comprehensive list of recommendations based on your observations at the institution.

In order to provide feedback and to address the issues and recommendations for your specific institution more efficiently, we have updated the review process. The Superintendent and Regional Director will meet with the CAB to provide a response to items in the Annual Report that can be resolved at the local level. In addition to this meeting, the Associate Deputy Minister will respond to the higher level operational and systemic issues that have been identified.

The ministry understands the importance of addressing the recommendations from the Annual Report and will work to respond to the issues in a timely manner.

I look forward to working with the CABs in the coming year to continue to increase transparency and provide the public with a greater understanding of the work being done in correctional services.

Sincerely,

Marie-France Lalonde  
Minister

**Ministry of Community Safety and  
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June 20, 2017

Ms. Rebecca Jesseman  
Chair, Community Advisory Board  
Ottawa-Carleton Detention Centre

Dear Ms. Jesseman:

Thank you for your submission of the 2016 Community Advisory Board (CAB) Annual Report for the Ottawa-Carleton Detention Centre (OCDC). The Annual Report has been reviewed by the ministry and we offer our responses and proposed actions to your recommendations below.

As the Honourable Marie-France Lalonde, Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, noted in her acknowledgement letter to you, the ministry understands the importance of addressing the recommendations in your report. The CABs have been vital in providing an objective view on the operational and systemic issues in our facilities.

The ministry is committed to collaborating with our correctional partners to modernize Ontario's correctional system and to be a leader in correctional service delivery.

The transformation of Ontario's correctional system is ongoing. Segregation remains one of our top priorities for reform. The Ombudsman recently released a report on the use of segregation and the report from our Independent Advisor on Corrections Reform, Mr. Howard Sapers, was released on May 4, 2017, outlining his recommendations for the use of segregation in Ontario.

Addressing access to mental health supports for our clients has also been a high priority item with respect to transformation. Additional mental health resources have been provided to various institutions across the province to better care for our clients with mental health issues.

On behalf of the ministry, thank you for the time you have given to this program. Your observations and recommendations will assist us on our journey towards improving Ontario's correctional service.

I am pleased to provide the following responses.

**Recommendation 1: The ministry release the annual report submitted at the end of March in a timely manner.**

We understand that a timely release of the Annual Report and corresponding responses is important to ensure that information remains relevant. As a result, we have implemented a new Annual Report process which found efficiencies in the original reporting process. This year we are aiming to post the reports publically in July.

Although we strive for an expedient release of the reports, we must also take into consideration the time that is needed for meaningful consultation across the ministry to ensure information provided back to the CABs is accurate. I place significant importance on certifying that our responses are informed and reflect all the work currently going on within our ministry in addition to providing responses in a timely manner.

Recommendation 2: Communications between CAB members and OCDC management be enhanced to ensure that the CAB is advised of incidents at the institution in a timely way.

Communication between the CAB members and institution management plays a vital role in the success of the program.

When incidents occur at our institutions, managers are required to follow an incident reporting protocol. The protocol will ensure that the appropriate parties are notified of the incident in a timely manner. Some incidents may also require monitoring, investigation, or other review. It is also important that the CAB be notified as soon as possible before there are any questions from the public or prior to any reports reaching the media.

In 2016, there were several management changes at OCDC which caused a delay in reporting incidents to the CAB. The current OCDC management team has committed to improving communication to CAB members when incidents occur, and will develop a local practice to inform you as soon as possible following an incident.

**Recommendation 3: The CAB continue to improve communication with all groups in the institution, with a focus on female inmates and Sergeants.**

The mandate of the CAB is to provide independent observation in institutions including its operation and administration. Communication among CAB members and all levels of institutional staff is important to meeting the mandate of the board.

It is my understanding that the management team at OCDC has provided the CAB with an opportunity to participate in a Sergeant's meeting. Going forward, CAB members will continue to receive invitations to attend these meetings. Also, I am happy to note that a Sergeant has been attending the regular CAB meetings since November 2016, enabling their viewpoint to be shared.

The CAB's intent to enhance communication with female clients is timely. As you know, the ministry has been working on several projects specific to our female clients, most notably the repurposing of the Roy McMurtry Youth Centre as a 32 bed Schedule 1 female secure treatment unit (FSTU) to enhance services for women with acute mental health symptoms.

I encourage you to also engage staff and volunteers working in the female unit to get their perspective on operations and share that feedback with us accordingly.

**Recommendation 4: The recommendations of the Task Force continue to be implemented.**

Since releasing the first progress report in October 2016, the province has successfully addressed all of the Task Force's short-term recommendations and is continuing to make progress on the remaining recommendations which require longer term solutions.

Improvements made since October include: the creation of interim step-down units; extended hours, seven days a week for professional visits from lawyers and advocates; increased spiritual/cultural counselling and programming for the diverse population at the OCDC; free weekly phone calls to make it easier for inmates on long-term remand who were moved from OCDC to other institutions to stay in touch with their families; and the establishment of a working group to improve the institution's food delivery services.

The province continues to make progress on the implementation of all remaining recommendations and the last of three progress reports was released on June 30, 2017.

**Recommendation 5: The ministry explore alternative options to OCDC for immigration detainees.**

At OCDC, immigration detainees are not all housed together in the same area of the institution, unlike the Central East Correctional Centre in Lindsay where there is a designated area for immigration holds. Immigration hold numbers at OCDC are very low. There may be some circumstances that would

require the detainee to remain at OCDC for a period of time for reasons such as court or immigration hearing requirements and access to legal counsel. They are moved as soon possible to CECC.

Recommendation 6: The ministry and institution respond in a timely and meaningful way to the recommendations of the health care and segregation reviews.

As noted above, the Ombudsman report on segregation was released on April 20, 2017, which was followed by the independent review of segregation in Ontario by Mr. Howard Sapers on May 4, 2017. These reviews, coupled with the work done to date within the ministry, will provide the best advice for moving forward and reforming the way we use segregation and we will be taking action on their recommendations immediately.

As part of the Task Force recommendations, an OCDC Health Care Review was conducted which provided recommendations on ways to improve the delivery of services to clients in custody. A full facility inspection was also conducted, as well as a feasibility study for step-down and mental health units to better support inmates with mental health needs. The health care review action plan is complete and OCDC has implemented a number of items including a new nursing schedule to address workload issues and a new vacation request protocol to address scheduling issues and avoid gaps in services.

In response to the Task Force, OCDC has been assigned 10 new full-time nursing positions to support the enhancements to the OCDC health care team. Interviews for these positions took place the week of June 19. Recruitment is ongoing. As well, the ministry is in the process of hiring an additional 239 staff to increase supports for clients, particularly those with significant challenges related to long-term segregation. To date, just over 200 positions have been filled. OCDC received the following positions:

- four correctional officers
- one deputy superintendent
- one staff sergeant
- two sergeants
- two mental health nurses
- one nurse
- one rehabilitation officer
- two social workers
- one social worker manager
- eight recreation officers
- two records clerks

All positions have been filled with the exception of one records clerk.

**Recommendation 7: The ministry develop a proactive communications strategy that promotes a more balanced coverage of activities and events at OCDC through a more proactive and transparent approach.**

The ministry's communication branch will continue to work with the OCDC CAB to profile the positive work that the CAB does and look for opportunities to highlight the good news stories coming out of OCDC for the public and media.

**Recommendation 8: The ministry and institution (OTIS and HC) implement an improved and preferably electronic records and data management system to improve timeliness and accuracy of information.**



The ministry is currently looking at options to modernization our health care departments which includes electronic medical records. The ministry's vision on electronic records includes the potential for interconnectivity with our Offender Tracking Information System (OTIS). Work to transform healthcare services in all correctional facilities is ongoing. We will be exploring options to shift the oversight and provision of healthcare services from the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

OCCDC is also exploring the use of electronic medication administration records for the distribution and management of client medication. This system will reduce workload on health care staff as it will replace the current handwritten medication records as well as decrease any potential for medication errors.

**Recommendation 9: A comprehensive recruitment and retention strategy be implemented to ensure that qualified recruits remain on staff.**

The Correctional Services Recruitment Unit (CSRU) is responsible for the development and delivery of our recruitment strategy. The Recruitment Unit is set up with regional recruitment leads, regional recruiters in the major centres and associate recruiters who are local experienced correctional officers at each institution. The strategy includes engaging with potential recruits at job fairs, discussion panels, cultural and community events. In order to meet the hiring needs of Correctional Services, the ministry must clear 1,200 recruits per year. The Recruitment Unit is working on posting open competitions for Correctional Officer positions every two months (approximately 5-6 postings per fiscal year). Additionally the Recruitment Unit has posted two additional target postings this fiscal year for high priority facilities (Toronto South Detention Centre and Kenora Jail). The CSRU is striving to obtain 300 or more active applicants per open posting.

The Recruitment Unit has put strategies in place in order to keep more applicants in the Correctional Officer competition pool including but not limited to:

- posting orientation material online
- reviewing Correctional Officer job criteria to identify and address barriers
- adopting a condensed testing/interview day
- providing potential candidates with the information and direction for FITCO, CPR, and security clearances from the first point of contact
- offering FITCO testing prior to the written competency-based testing phase, and
- offering open houses at each of the institutions in order to spark interest in not only the institution itself, but as a career in Corrections

**Recommendation 10: The ministry look at wage and compensation policies with a view to ensuring parity and efficacy in securing and retaining qualified staff at all levels.**

Ministry employees are represented by bargaining agents. As you know, the Ontario Public Service Employees Union is the agent that represents most of our front-line institutional staff. Wages for employees represented by a bargaining agent are collectively bargained centrally between the Employer (Treasury Board Secretariat) and the union. During the collective bargaining process, wages are discussed and both the employer and the union will use industry comparators when examining wages. This provides a basis for changes to our current wages.

**Recommendation 11: Staffing at the Sergeant level be increased.**

As noted above, as part of reforms underway in the provincial correctional system, the ministry has hired an additional 239 staff, including dedicated segregation managers, and deployed them to provincial institutions to help reduce the use of segregation and support clients as they transition back to general population.

Of the 239 new staff, two new sergeants and one new staff sergeant has been added to the staffing complement at ODC. With respect to sergeant vacancies, ODC has recruited two sergeants. The successful candidates were hired in April 2017.

Also, as previously noted, of the 239 new staff at the management level, ODC has received an additional deputy superintendent and a manager of social work along with four correctional officers, two mental health nurses, one nurse, one rehabilitation officer, two social workers, eight recreation officers and two records clerks.

**Recommendation 12: A performance management system including annual performance reports be implemented.**

Annual performance reviews are a standard ministry practice for all staff. At ODC, there were some challenges in completing annual reviews which will be addressed by aligning sergeants into platoons where staff will be distributed equally among sergeants. The platoon format will allow sergeants to complete regular performance reviews on their dedicated staff and report back to senior management on performance quarterly.

**Recommendation 13: Senior management ensure effective two-way communication with staff.**

ODC has reintroduced shift briefing to all staff. This was a gap in communication. Briefings, held before each shift, provides consistent messaging to all staff. Staff have an opportunity to reach out to sergeants and senior managers about questions and concerns they may have.

**Recommendation 14: Staff be provided with training supportive of preventing, recognizing, and addressing mental health concerns at the individual level and among colleagues.**

Ontario Correctional Services is fully committed to recognizing and decreasing the impact of Occupational Stress Injury (OSI) on all our employees' mental health and well-being. Ensuring our employees have the knowledge and skills to recognize and address the impact and signs of occupational stress, including Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in themselves and others, as well as having resources and supports available to help them deal with occupational stress, is a key focus for us.

A mental health curriculum outlining topics for employee (staff and managers) training will be developed. The curriculum will focus on topics identified in the literature as being essential for correctional staff. While the action plan is being developed, initial training will be offered to provide basic awareness and start helping employees increase their resilience. Delivery of initial training is expected to start in the fall 2017. The ministry is continuing to explore further staff development in this area.

**Recommendation 15: Enhanced mental health training be provided to interested and qualified staff in order to enhance capacity to deal with inmates who present with complex needs.**

In June of 2016, the "Understanding and Responding to Inmates with Mental Health Challenges" training was completed, reaching 92 per cent compliance across the ministry. Currently, the Ontario Correctional Services College (OCSC) in consultation with the Institutional Training Manager group is compiling a list of correctional staff that still require this training. Courses for this group of staff started on May 23, 2017, and concluded by June 30, 2017.

At OCDC, the final training numbers from OCSC from October 2016 shows that 235 staff completed the training.

As well, as a part of the Correctional Officer Assessment and Training (COTA) program, new graduates will complete a rigorous assessment and eight-week training program, this includes mental health training and inmate management techniques prior to commencing service in our facilities.

**Recommendation 16: The current CISM approach be reviewed to ensure alignment with best practice in post-incident support.**

The Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) program was established to address critical incident stress among employees exposed to a critical incident in the workplace. The CISM program provides proactive education regarding critical incident stress to correctional staff as well as responsive interventions in a crisis event or emergency situation to minimize the harmful effects of job stress by providing staff with methods that reduce potential stress related reactions and immediate crisis intervention.

The CISM program is currently under evaluation by the ministry's Program Effectiveness, Statistics and Applied Research unit. The evaluation will be completed by fall 2017. The ministry is committed to ensuring that the program utilizes evidence-based practices and techniques when supporting our staff through critical incidents in the workplace. The results of the evaluation will be shared with the CAB once the review is complete.

**Recommendation 17: Workplace wellness programs be reviewed for opportunities to enhance well-being and morale.**

The ministry is committed to improving staff wellness through training (see recommendation 14) and local committees. It is my understanding that OCDC has a newly established staff wellness committee. Although the committee is fairly new, it is aiming to release its first staff newsletter in spring 2017. This committee will promote wellness on a broad scale including keeping a healthy workplace, healthy eating and work, life, balance. The CAB will be included on the distribution of the newsletter and may wish to have a wellness committee member participate in a CAB meeting to go over their goals for the committee.

It is anticipated that with addition of the shift briefing and the resulting opening the lines of communication between staff and managers, staff morale will increase. Communication is a key component in a successful organization as it builds trust and understanding among colleagues.

**Recommendation 18: Enhanced responsivity to the cultural diversity of OCDC inmates through recruitment efforts and training.**

The intent of our outreach strategy is to recruit individuals who are diverse in all aspects of the word including culturally and ethnically diverse, LGBTQ and French communities. The ministry engages with individuals' who are coming out of high school, college and university graduates, as well as those

entering a second career. We are also focusing efforts and outreach on culturally specific events to promote correctional careers to ethnically diverse group which will help to increase diversity among our staff.

Here are some of the events our recruitment unit has attended across the province:

- Wahta Mohawks: Meeting
- Ottawa Eid Al-Fitr & Muslim Summer Festival
- Anokiiwin Office of Shooniyaa Wa-Biitong – Job Connect for Treaty 3 – Fort Frances
- Oshweken Employment Centre
- Jerkfest – Toronto
- TD SouthAsian Festival - Ottawa
- Palestinian Festival – Ottawa
- Multi-cultural event – Timmins
- Barrie, Kingston, Toronto, Muskoka, Windsor-Essex, Ottawa Capital and Peterborough Pride Festivals
- Maamwi Kindaaswin Education Day, Festival & Powwow Celebration – North Bay
- Association of Black Law Enforcement (ABEL) Gala

We also have several employee networks that facilitate and support learning including Council for Unity & Racial Equality (CURE), Pride in Corrections, Women in Corrections and Correctional Services Nation to Nation.

**Recommendation 19: Health care resources be enhanced to ensure adequate shift coverage, and quality of care, including consistent delivery of medication, and timely and effective appointments.**

As part of the OCDC Task Force recommendations, OCDC has enhanced its health care department by adding 10 new full-time nurses. Interviews for all 10 nurse positions took place the week of June 19, 2017. The recruitment process is ongoing. OCDC has also received additional correctional officers to assist the health care department with community escorts. As well, as part of the mental health initiative, additional funding for psychiatry services has been added. OCDC is in the process of recruiting a new psychologist to improve access to mental health care in the institution.

As part of the 239 staff noted in Recommendation 6 to improve the use of segregation in Ontario, OCDC received a number of new rehabilitation and health care positions including:

- two mental health nurses
- one nurse
- one rehabilitation officer
- two social workers
- one social work manager
- eight recreation officers

As noted above, OCDC is also exploring the use of electronic medication administration records for the distribution and management of client medication.

**Recommendation 20: Health care record-keeping be revised to improve efficiency and clear the existing filing backlog.**

The ministry is committed to maintaining accurate up-to-date records on our client's health. Managing the filing of records can be challenging at times as we currently only have written health care records. In order to improve the current backlog at OCDC, a temporary record clerk has been recruited to

assist in filing the health care records.

As noted above, the ministry is currently exploring options for the modernization of our health care department which would include the adoption of electronic health records.

**Recommendation 21: Access to psychology services be increased, including on-site access on weekends.**

We understand that the need for psychology and other mental health resources for our clients are important to their rehabilitation and that their need for services extends beyond regular business hours. OCDC is evaluating on-site weekend access of mental health resources and is in preliminary discussion with the union regarding potential changes to the current schedules. This process does take a considerable amount of consultation and planning as it impacts current work arrangements for staff. The CAB will be kept updated on this process.

**Recommendation 22: OCDC management actively support and ensure access to volunteer-led programs for inmates, including timely communication with volunteers and provision of information to inmates regarding program availability.**

There are approximately 228 volunteers on record providing volunteer services to clients at OCDC. Programming includes alcoholic anonymous, indigenous programming, counselling, and spiritual and religious care. It is my understanding that there is considerable interest from volunteer groups and agencies in the community wishing to provide volunteer services at OCDC. However, there are some limitations with respect to program space to accommodate volunteers at the institution. The institution management is supportive of volunteer-led programming and is working with various groups to develop schedules and ensure that clients are aware of programs as they become available.

There is also a recognition event that is held for volunteers at OCDC on a biennial basis. The next volunteer appreciation event is set to be held this year.

**Recommendation 23: Programs for Indigenous inmates continue to develop, including feasts as part of culturally appropriate programming.**

In June 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission made 94 recommendations which aimed to incorporate indigenous culture and teaching throughout Canadian society. The ministry was able to secure funding to strengthen current Native Inmate Liaison Services and Elder services to provide clients with culturally specific programming.

Unfortunately, last year, due to changes in management, the institution was not able to host the annual Indigenous feast. This year, the feast is to take place on the summer solstice (June 21, 2017).

**Recommendation 24: Full-time cleaning staff be increased and that cleaning services also be conducted on weekends and evenings as required.**

As you noted there are currently two full-time cleaning staff at OCDC working Monday through Saturday on opposite 12-hour shifts. The OCDC management notes that one of their cleaners is currently on a three-month secondment in Penetanguishene and, as such, the institution is searching for a replacement on a temporary basis. At this time, there are no plans to increase the cleaning staff complement at OCDC. However, there is a new professional cleaning service on contract to assist with the cleanliness of the facility.

**Recommendation 25: A comprehensive cleaning strategy be developed and implemented.**

As part of the OCDC Task Force recommendations, an enhanced schedule and scope of cleaning for the entire institution has been implemented. As previously mentioned, OCDC has secured a new service provider to provide cleaning services throughout the institution. Specifically, the service provider attends the institution every Wednesday to clean the health care department and provides supplementary cleaning services on an as needed basis. The service provider is also responsible for cleaning units in advance of their scheduled painting time.

**Recommendation 26: Cleaning to remove bodily waste be conducted within 24 hours by professionals with appropriate training, equipment, and sanitizing products.**

The proper cleaning and removal of bodily waste is important to the health and safety of our staff and clients. As per the OCDC Task Force recommendations, the institution now has a service provider who provides cleaning services for cells soiled with bodily waste. Upon notification, the response time for the professional cleaning provider is around five to six hours which is well within the recommended 24-hour limit.

**Recommendation 27: Administrative requirements associated with use of force and segregation be reviewed with a view to increasing efficiency while maintaining accountability.**

An audit of the Use of Force policy was recently conducted by the Ontario Internal Audit Division, Treasury Board Secretariat. The audit identified a number of recommendations to ensure that roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, communicated and understood, and to ensure that institutions and regions are able to process use of force incidents in a timely manner. As a result of the audit, the current Use of Force policy was identified by the Institutional Operational Policy Unit as a priority for review.

The independent review of corrections on the use of segregation in Ontario's adult correctional facilities speaks to the use of all forms of segregation in Ontario's corrections facilities and identifies opportunities for longer term corrections reformation. Ministry policies related to segregation and related administrative requirements are currently under review to address report recommendations as well as the recommendations of the Ontario Ombudsman that were released earlier this year.

**Recommendation 28: Strip-search protocols be reviewed and revised as necessary to ensure respect for privacy; and in particular, to ensure that strip searches are not conducted in an open setting.**

As noted in last year's response, strip searches are a necessary practice to maintain security at the facility and we endeavour to ensure they are conducted with professionalism and sensitivity.

The ministry's policy on strip searches is not under review at this time. Policy provides direction to staff to conduct searches professionally and to exercise sensitivity and preserve inmate dignity. Where practical, strip searches of inmates will be conducted individually and in private.

At the local level, OCDC management is ensuring that staff conducting client strip searches do so with dignity and respect and in private to meet the policy standards.

**Recommendation 29: OCDC and the ministry look into customized toilets for the collection of contraband following detection by the new body scanner.**

The ministry has one customized toilet at the Thunder Bay Jail which has not been used for over a year as clients have been compliant in turning over contraband prior to being housed in this cell. The toilet is an effective tool for separating bodily waste from the contraband without having our staff

having to engage in separation of the waste from the contraband.

The ministry has currently invested in the advanced technology full-body scanners which will be in all 26 adult provincial correctional facilities to further improve staff and inmate safety, reduce contraband and enhance security. We are interested in evaluating the impact of the body scanners on reducing contraband prior to making any commitments to other technologies including the use of customized toilets.

**Recommendation 30: The quality of the meals provided continues to be evaluated and improved.**

The ministry continues to work with the service provider to change and/or improve meals as appropriate. Concerns raised regarding food taste, quality (texture, appearance, portion size) and waste are noted and discussed with the service provider to determine necessary steps for resolve. Should an urgent issue arise, immediate steps are taken for resolution. All issues are tracked at weekly meetings between the ministry and the service provider. A summary is reviewed and discussed at quarterly meetings held between the ministry foodservice managers and service provider.

As part of the OCDC Task Force recommendations the ministry is undertaking a food services review. The ministry is currently examining a variety of options to modernize the food service delivery program throughout the province. As you noted in your report, the ministry is monitoring uneaten food return to the kitchen to assist in informing discussions with the service provider.

**Recommendation 31: The phone system be replaced with a more affordable alternative that is not dependent on land lines.**

We understand that with new technology, individuals and families are less dependent on land lines and are moving to having cell phones or other telephone types (such as voice over internet providers) as their primary communication tools. The ministry is exploring options to address concerns that have been expressed with respect to the current phone systems and will provide information to the CAB as soon as other systems have been evaluated.

**Recommendation 32: The availability and affordability of canteen items be improved, particularly healthy food choices and hygiene products.**

Canteen food items are optional and supplementary to the daily meals and snacks provided by the ministry. During the canteen selection process, the cost of items is evaluated and quality and affordability are considered. Since July 30, 2016, 11 new healthier items have been added to our canteen list.

As noted in last year's report, to address the continued availability of healthy food canteen options, the service provider is required to submit a summary of their market research and recommended additions of healthier snack food to the ministry on a quarterly basis. The ministry will then do a review of the suggested items, which includes looking at quality, affordability, health, safety and institutional requirements prior to selecting additional items.

Hygiene products are also reviewed by the canteen committee particularly when suggestions on improvements to specific items are received from the facilities. As a remand centre, OCDC uses the remand canteen list which is more restrictive for safety purposes than the sentenced canteen list.

**Recommendation 33: A sufficient number of tweezers and nail clippers be purchased and properly disinfected after each and every use.**

The ministry's goal is to foster and maintain a healthy and safe environment for our clients. Therefore, we have established procedures and provide products and services to clients that allow them to maintain an acceptable level of hygiene and grooming. Local standing orders have been established regarding access to and or collection or exchange of hygiene and grooming products, tools, services and procedures for cleaning and disinfecting of equipment. Institutional staff are responsible for ensuring that hygiene product are properly cleaned and disinfected.

At OCDC, we have confirmation from the health care manager that each living unit has the appropriate disinfectant solution to be used to clean the hygiene items. Going forward, correctional officers will be reminded that the proper solution and timing is used to clean the items. A memo will be recirculated to remind staff of the standards for cleaning these items. In addition, OCDC management will ensure that multiple pairs of clean tweezers and clippers will be available on the units.

## **Conclusion**

The role of the CAB is not only to provide us with recommendations on improvements, but also to highlight some of the great work going on in our institutions. I would like to recognize the many success stories outlined in the Annual Report including the value of increased staffing at OCDC last year, the success of the new client transfer process which has sustained more manageable numbers at OCDC and the improvements made to Indigenous program delivery in the latter part of 2016, among others.

I truly appreciate all the hard work that went into preparing your Annual Report. The recommendations made by the CAB are important to our continuous growth and transformation. I would like to thank-you for volunteering your time to the ministry as CAB members. Committed volunteers are hard to find and we are grateful to have you and all the CAB members at OCDC as a part of the correctional services team.

I look forward to working with the CAB this year on implementing as many of the recommendations as possible and I am excited to see this innovative program develop into its full potential.

Sincerely,

Marg Welch  
Associate Deputy Minister, Correctional Services

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