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JUL 28 2020

Mr. Frank Bosscha, Q.C.
Deputy Minister of Justice and Deputy Solicitor General Justice and Solicitor General
224 Bowker Building
9833-109 Street
Edmonton, Alberta
T5K 2E8

Re: Verdict at the Public Fatality Inquiry into the Death of inmate Ryan William WITVOET at Edmonton Institution, Edmonton, Alberta, on August 20, 2015

Dear Mr. Bosscha:

The Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) thanks you for your letter dated April 6, 2020, and the report from the Honourable Judge R.W. Brandt dated March 24, 2020, stemming from the Inquest held from January 7-9, 2019, into the death of Ryan William WITVOET at Edmonton Institution, at which CSC was a voluntary participant. While CSC recognizes that the recommendation is not binding, we have given it serious consideration and provide you with the response below.

Recommendation no. 1:

That Correctional Service Canada make substance abuse treatment of prisoners a priority. This should include the provision of substance abuse treatment to all inmates who desire it. Such treatment should include the provision of Methadone or other appropriate medications, and should also allow prisoners to repeat CSC substance abuse programs whenever they could benefit from such repetition.

CSC recognises the need to make substance abuse treatment a priority. Since 2002, CSC has been offering Opioid Agonist Treatment (OAT) (i.e. Methadone/Suboxone) to individuals suffering from Opioid Use Disorder. In the Spring of 2018, CSC implemented Suboxone film as an alternate method of delivery. Further, in late Spring of 2019, CSC was the pioneer in Canada for the implementation of Sublocade, an injectable form of Buprenorphine with the goal of increasing the availability of the OAT program in response to the National Opioid Crisis. As a monthly injection, this formulation offers significant advantages by way of safety and efficiency and there were 95 individuals on Sublocade by February 2020. The organisation continues to explore additional ways of increasing support to those on OAT and continually updates the *Guidance on Opioid*

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Agonist Treatment to ensure consistent standardized and effective OAT for individuals across all sites and regions within CSC. The *Guidance on Opioid Agonist Treatment* document outlines best practices consistent with the Canadian Research Initiative in Substance Misuse (CRISM), *National Guideline for the Clinical Management of Opioid Use Disorder*. Consistent with the Canadian Drug and Substance Strategy, CSC's approach to drug and substance use includes a focus on reducing the demand for illicit drugs by providing effective treatment for substance abuse. Mental health treatment is provided based on an individual assessment of need, in cases where substance abuse is an identified need area, Mental Health Professionals will work with individuals to identify treatment goals.

CSC is also in the process of implementing the Self-Management and Recovery Training (SMART) which consists of a suite of services that includes peer support, focus groups, and trauma-informed motivational based counselling. SMART is an evidence-based program that has shown to be successful and it has been adopted by correctional systems and communities in other countries.

In addition, CSC's Drug Strategy focuses on reducing the demand for illicit drugs by supporting effective approaches to treatment and rehabilitation. The Integrated Correctional Program Module addresses multiple criminogenic needs including substance abuse. There is also a separate Indigenous Integrated Correctional Program and an Inuit Program for Indigenous offenders, which provides cultural-specific content, including an exploration of each offender's unique Indigenous Social History. The model provides both institutional and community maintenance programs.

CSC also has a Correctional Program continuum for women offenders that holistically addresses multiple criminogenic needs, including substance abuse, in an integrated manner. Intervention is gender-responsive in recognition that women offenders have unique needs and considerations.

I trust the foregoing information effectively responds to the Inquiry recommendation.

Yours sincerely,

Original Signed

Alain Tousignant

c.c.: Regional Deputy Commissioner, Prairie Region
Director General, Executive Secretariat, NHQ
Executive Director and General Counsel, Legal Services, NHQ
Assistant Commissioner, Correctional Operations and Programs, NHQ
Assistant Commissioner, Health Services, NHQ
A/Director General, Incident Investigations Branch, NHQ
Office of the Correctional Investigator