Prison Health IS Public Health

Presentation to LEPH2018 Conference
Howard Sapers

October 22, 2018
Toronto, Ontario
Presentation Outline

• Who is incarcerated?

• Principles governing health in correctional facilities
  • Canada Health Act, RSC 1985, c C-6
  • Ministry of Correctional Services Act, RRO 1990, Reg 778

• What do we know about the health status, risks and needs of incarcerated individuals?

• Public health implications of inmate health

• Moving towards an integrated health care system in Ontario
Adult Correctional Populations in Canada

• Federal corrections (Correctional Service Canada)
  • sentences of incarceration of two years or more

• Provincial/Territorial corrections
  • probation
  • sentences of incarceration less than two years
  • holds inmates on remand and immigration detention

• 2016/17: ~40,000 adults in custody
Ontario Provincial Corrections

Population Distribution based on Total Average Institutional Count FY 2016/17

- Remand Days Stay: 68.2%
- Provincial Sentenced Days Stay: 25.8%
- Provincial Sentenced (Intermittent): 1.8%
- Immigration: 1.6%
- Federal Sentenced: 2.4%
- Other: 0.2%

Data obtained from Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services
Legal Regulations for Health Care in Prisons

• Basic Principles for the Treatment of Prisoners
  • 1990, United Nations General Assembly

• Canada Health Act
  • 1985, excludes **federal** correctional inmates

• Ministry of Correctional Services Act
  • 1990, duty of superintendent to manage health of inmates
Health Care in Ontario Corrections

Image from Government of Canada
Health Status of Correctional Populations

Image from Pew Charitable Trusts

Image from Pedagogy Education

Image from Justice Not Jails

Image from Denver Post
Health Risks of Correctional Populations

• Correctional environments contribute to poor inmate health

• Risky behaviours of inmates contribute to transmission of disease
  • Injection drug use (including needle-sharing)
  • Unprotected sex

• Correctional populations are at a heightened risk of death both inside and outside of institutions
An Opportunity for Health Care

Medical Room, Monteith Correctional Complex

Dentist Office, Ontario Correctional Institute
Continuum of Care

Chart 3
Releases from adult provincial/territorial custody, by time served, 2016/2017
percent of releases

1. Excludes unknown length of stay.

Note: Excludes Alberta and British Columbia due to the unavailability of data.

IROC Recommendations

Infirmary, Maplehurst Correctional Complex

Corrections in Ontario: Directions for Reform
September 2017
Prison Health as Public Health in Ontario

Healthcare Area, Vanier Centre for Women
“It is said that no one truly knows a nation until one has been inside its jails. A nation should not be judged by how it treats its highest citizens, but its lowest ones.”

Nelson Mandela

For more information please contact us at iroc@ontario.ca