

POLICY AND PRACTICE CHALLENGES IN CANADA

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INTRODUCTION

- New Federal administration, 17 months into its mandate
- No major changes in policy and direction in Corrections but some roll back by the courts of some of the sentencing reforms of previous administration
- Plans for a review of the Criminal Justice system
- Policy shifts in other fields such as Health, Mental Health and Narcotic strategies

ISSUES NEEDING POLICY RESPONSES OR ENHANCED PRACTICES

- Prisons overcrowded especially in remand centers
- Time waiting for trial is lengthening
- Aging of the prison population (average age 39)
- Solitary confinement/administrative segregation
- Mental health services for offenders
- Substance abuse crisis in the community
- Community based corrections needs an infusing of funding if it is to manage the reduction in prison populations through community supervision.

Three Priorities

- Segregation (the use of solitary confinement)
- Mental health policy and practices
- Substance abuse treatment in light of the current opiate crisis

SEGREGATION

- Disciplinary and Administrative
- Motivation for changes in use of segregation
- 1. Ashley Smith incident (Federal)
- 2. Adam Capay (Provincial)
- There have been some adjustments in response to inquiries and other investigations
- There is still court challenges by the Canadian Civil Liberties Association
- Ontario has established a review of their procedures and policies in light of the Capay issue.

WHY COMMUNITY CORRECTIONAL AGENCIES NEED TO BE CONCERNED

- The effect of segregation on the potential for successful reintegration.
- Focus of funding sources could change
- Importance of community stabilization efforts for offenders re-entering the community that include mental health and substances abuse treatment coupled with adequate housing and employment
