



Human Services and Justice
Coordinating Committee Ontario

Stranded without Personal Belongings:

putting offenders with
mental health issues at risk

January 29, 2014



HSJCC Webinar

Thanks to **Evidence Exchange Network (EENet)** for providing the funding and resources to host this webinar!

- Please mute your phone and mute the speakers on your computer.
- To ask a question, please type your question in the chat box.
- Power-point presentation will be emailed to you following the webinar.
- Please complete the brief feedback questionnaire following the webinar.

Overview of Presentation

1. About the HSJCC
2. The Policy Issue of Prisoner Belongings
3. Promising Practices
 - A. Simcoe-Muskoka Region
 - B. Waterloo Region



Presenters

- **Katie Almond**, Probation & Parole Officer, Ministry of Community Safety & Correctional Services and Co-Chair of the Provincial HSJCC
- **Dorina Simeonov**, Planning & Policy Analyst, Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) Ontario and Policy Advisor to the Provincial HSJCC
- **Michael Dunn**, Program Manager- Human Services Justice System Programs, Opioid Treatment Program , CMHA Simcoe County Branch, Simcoe-Muskoka Regional HSJCC Co-Chair
- **Joslyn Gaston**, Mental Health Court Coordinator, CMHA Waterloo Wellington Dufferin Branch, Kitchener Local HSJCC Chair

HSJCC Network

- Responding to a recognized need in the province to coordinate resources and services, and plan more effectively for people who are in conflict with the law
- Each HSJCC is a voluntary collaboration between health and social service organizations, community mental health and addictions organizations and partners from the justice sector including crown attorneys, judges, police services and correctional service providers
- Priority consideration is for people with a serious mental illness, developmental disability, acquired brain injury, drug and alcohol addiction, and/or fetal alcohol syndrome

HSJCC Network

HSJCC Network is comprised of

- 42 Local HSJCCs
- 14 Regional HSJCCs
- Provincial HSJCC
- Each HSJCC is a voluntary collaboration between health and social service organizations, community mental health and addictions organizations and partners from the justice sector including crown attorneys, judges, police services and correctional service providers
- Funded by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care



#HSJCC

Provincial HSJCC

Provincial HSJCC consists of

- Regional HSJCC Chairs representing their Regions
- Ex-officio members from important stakeholder groups such as Correctional Service of Canada, Ontario Provincial Police and Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police, Legal Aid Ontario, and Community Networks of Specialized Care
- Ex-officio representatives from 5 Provincial Ministries:
 - Attorney General
 - Children and Youth Services
 - Community and Social Services
 - Community Safety and Correctional Services
 - Health and Long-Term Care

HSJCC Webinar

***Stranded without Personal Belongings:
putting offenders with mental health
issues at risk***

**The Issue of Prisoner Belongings –
“A Recipe for Re-offending”
Discussion Paper Overview**

Background



- Mental health issues are 2 to 3 times more prevalent in federal penitentiaries than in the general population
 - 11% of males and 22% of females have a mental health diagnosis on admission



- 36% of individuals in custody experience a mental health issue



- 80% of offenders in federal prisons have a serious substance use issue, 50% of offenders identify substance use as a cause of their offence

Policy Issue



- “We have had people released without the meds, without health cards, without money, without keys to their residence, and even some released in the middle of January with no clothes other than an orange jumpsuit.”
 - Hugh Miller, Waterloo Region Bail Supervision Program



Policy Issue:

Prisoner Belongings Retrieval

- Individuals cannot or do not pick up their belongings
 - E.g. preliminary estimate of 30% of people (24 out of 80) in custody not picking up their belongings in May, 2010 (Maplehurst Detention Centre, Waterloo Region)
- Individuals without their belongings are more likely to re-offend



Policy Context

- Lack of designated funding for prisoner belongings retrieval
- No provincial system, structure or policy is actively addressing the issue but local work is being done
- Lack of research on the relationship between prisoner belongings retrieval and recidivism rates



Who is involved?

- Individuals in custody, family members
- Courts
- Remand Centres, Detention Centres, Jails
- Probation and Parole Offices
- Bail Supervision Programs
- Treatment Centres
- Regional Police Services
- Ontario Provincial Police
- Community Organizations
 - CMHA branches
 - Shelters
 - John Howard Society
 - etc.

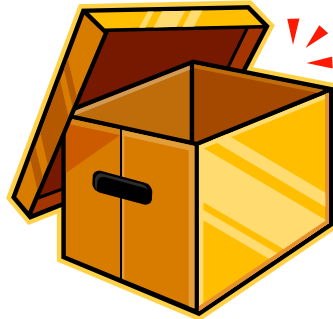


What are the System Barriers?

- Liability



- Space



- Staffing

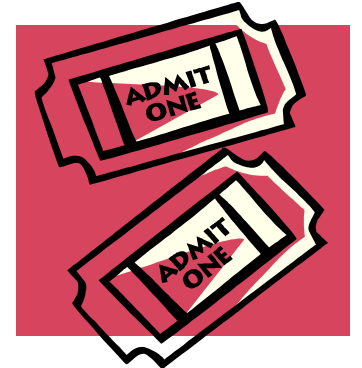


- Transportation



Current Practices

1. Courier belongings to local CMHA branch or mental health service organization (Durham, Chatham-Kent, Champlain East, London-Middlesex, Haldimand-Norfolk)
2. Provision of bus tickets to individual's home upon release (Sault Ste. Marie, Kawartha Lakes).
3. Community organizations volunteer to retrieve and hold belongings. (Waterloo)
4. Protocols and Processes (Waterloo, Simcoe-Muskoka, Northumberland, Peterborough)



#HSJCC

Next Steps

1. Recommending the HSJCC look at this issue at the provincial level.
2. Advocating for studies into the relationship between recidivism and prisoners not being granted access to personal belongings within a reasonable time frame.
3. Specific recommendations for the Waterloo Region
– space, protocol



#HSJCC

Contact Information

For more information about the Provincial HSJCC, and to access the full Discussion Paper - The Issue of Prisoner Belongings - “A Recipe for Re-offending,” visit:

www.hsjcc.on.ca



To join the HSJCC Network mailing list, contact:
CKT_Committee@hsjcc.on.ca

#HSJCC

The Issue of Prisoner Belongings

HSJCC Simcoe–Muskoka

Michael Dunn
CMHA Simcoe–County Branch



Simcoe–Muskoka Region

- ▶ LHIN 12– Barrie, Orillia, Collingwood, Midland, Muskoka
- ▶ Population of 454,000 people
- ▶ Seven hospitals
- ▶ *Central North Correctional Centre (CNCC):* over 1 180 inmates, catchment includes Windsor, Toronto, Huntsville, Gravenhurst, Parry Sound.



Release from Custody Prog.

- ▶ Protocol between CMHA, Enaahtig Healing Lodge and Central North Correctional Centre
- ▶ A response to an increase in mentally disordered individuals in custody
- ▶ Aim: “To assist persons with mental disorders who are inmates at the CNCC (both sentenced and remand) to reintegrate into their home community.”
- ▶ Created in March 2007
- ▶ Funded 4 FTE Counsellors
- ▶ Serve LHIN 12– Simcoe Muskoka
- ▶ Weekly Discharge Planning Coordination Committee
- ▶ Consistency for client, coordinated plan and specific mental health and Aboriginal services
- ▶ Served 118 clients over the past one year period



The Challenge

- ▶ Inmates from CNCC may be released from court however belongings/ ID/ meds/ money etc. remain at the institution
- ▶ Remote location of CNCC
- ▶ Public transit not available to return
- ▶ High prevalence of mental health issues (30% , Canadian Psychiatric Assoc.)
- ▶ “A Recipe for Re-offending”



Our Approach to the Issue

1. *Partnership with CNCC*– Pick-up belongings on client's behalf; Improved access to belongings; Decreased wait time from 30–45min to 10–15min.
2. *Partnership with community agencies*–Assist clients of other service providers internal and external to CMHA.
3. *Court*– Onsite CMHA staff, educating justice partners (ie. Seek 1 day in custody to retrieve belongings), communicating with CNCC (eg. Urgent Needs Communication Form) , and between RFC and Court staff.





CANADIAN MENTAL
HEALTH ASSOCIATION
ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE
POUR LA SANTÉ MENTALE

To whom it may concern:

I, _____ (DOB _____), give permission to
_____, CMHA Counsellor, to retrieve my
belongings and any funds I have left at the Central North Correctional Centre.

These belongings include: _____

My property bag # is _____.

I was released from CNCC on _____.

Signature of client and date

Signature of witness and date

By signing this document, I agree that the Canadian Mental Health Association Simcoe County Branch and any of its employees are not liable for any loss or damage to my property.



Over the Past Year

- ▶ Retrieved belongings for 31 people over the past year
- ▶ Partnerships with other agencies (ie. David Busby Street Centre)
- ▶ Request medication script from CNCC
- ▶ Implemented OTN Psychiatry Clinic



Elizabeth Fry Society

- ▶ Located on Maple St., downtown Barrie
- ▶ Program facilitator and Agency Rep. at CNCC
- ▶ Assist women being released to Barrie
- ▶ Concern re: what is being transported and the amount of belongings being transported



The Challenges

- ▶ Clients released outside of LHIN 12
- ▶ Takes staff time from other services
- ▶ Large geographic area
- ▶ Expectation that we can always pick-up
- ▶ Storage for collected belongings
- ▶ Concerns re: lost items
- ▶ Not all clients want to return for one-day in custody option– stress associated with returning.
- ▶ Clients returning locally from other institutions



Catherine's client John



What Next?

- ▶ Perhaps a funded position? Shared between agencies across the region?
- ▶ Perhaps small envelope sent to court with ID, keys, phone?
- ▶ Ship belongings to clients hometown (local police station)?



Questions ?

Thank-you.

Michael Dunn mdunn@cmhastarttalking.ca



PRISONER BELONGINGS IN THE WATERLOO REGION

JOSLYN GASTON, MA
CO-CHAIR KITCHENER HSJCC

MENTAL HEALTH COURT COORDINATOR
CMHA WWD

2010-Why This All Began

- ❖ A man is released at court with time served after spending some time at Maplehurst. The man was experiencing poor mental health. He did not have a physician and wanted to connect with a walk-in clinic to re-new his prescriptions. He was unable to access the clinic because his wallet, with his health card, was at Maplehurst. The man ended up unnecessarily deteriorating to the point he required a lengthy involuntary psychiatric admission.
- ❖ A man, arrested with his mental health medications, was remanded at Maplehurst and eventually released at court after a guilty plea with time served. The man's medication was not transported with him. It was late Friday and he could not get a hold of his doctor. The pharmacy was not able to authorize a repeat of his prescription medication given the repeat was not due for 3 weeks. The man had to spend 7 hours in a hospital emergency in order to get a couple days worth of medication until he was able to see his prescribing physician the following week.

Scenarios Continued

- ❖ A man receives Ontario Works and works odd temporary manual labour jobs requiring work boots. The man was arrested with his wallet, his remaining \$40.00 and his work boots. After being released a couple days later on bail, he was not able to work as his work boots were at Maplehurst along with his wallet.
- ❖ A homeless man was released on a guilty plea with time served. This man had money placed in his bank account on a regular basis by a trustee. This man would not use formal systems, food banks or shelters where he had to be around other people. The man was extremely upset that he could not access his money to buy food like he normally did. He advised his intention to break the law in order to get back to Maplehurst and get his belongings, and ensure he was not released at court when sentenced.

Something Needed to be Done

2010:

- ❖ Contact made with various community agencies and stakeholders
- ❖ Discussion paper written
- ❖ Planning to create a Prisoner Belongings Committee

2011:

- ❖ June 23, 2011 – First Prisoner Belongings meeting which included individuals from:
 - ❖ Crown Attorney's Office
 - ❖ Waterloo Regional Police Services (WRPS)
 - ❖ CMHA-GRB
 - ❖ Maplehurst Correctional Institute
 - ❖ John Howard Society
 - ❖ The Working Centre/Psychiatric Outreach
 - ❖ Waterloo Region Crime Prevention Council
 - ❖ Grand Valley Institution

First Prisoner Belongings Committee Meeting

- ❖ Issues regarding prisoner belongings were explored:
 - ❖ volume of items
 - ❖ storage space
 - ❖ cost of The Working Centre retrieving belongings from Milton every 3 to 4 weeks (with a signed consent)
 - ❖ funding
 - ❖ difficulties experienced at the Milton institutions

Solutions Proposed:

- ❖ Working Centre to continue to go to Milton to retrieve prisoner belongings (in a more streamlined process), then store the belongings until they can be picked up
- ❖ Working Centre and WRPS would create a protocol that would give the prisoners the option of their belongings staying at court, picked up by The Working Centre and stored until they can be picked up

Diverting the Belongings

- ❖ WRPS senior police leadership was approached about diverting belongings to The Working Centre instead of sending them to Milton with the prisoner
- ❖ Details, policies, procedures and consents begin to be drafted
- ❖ Meanwhile...someone from The Working Centre continues to go to Milton every 3 to 4 weeks.

Prisoner Property Transfer Protocol

- ❖ Protocol between WRPS and The Working Centre approved in February 2013
- ❖ Implemented on March 4, 2013
- ❖ Information was distributed to various community partners and stakeholders

Highlights of Protocol

- ❖ Prisoner has option, on first day of remand, to request his/her personal property remain at the WRPS holding facility and then transferred to The Working Centre. The property will remain in the care of The Working Centre for up to 3 months
- ❖ Prisoner must sign a **Property Direction and Release of Liability**. 2 copies are made (original to WRPS, copy to prisoner and copy to designated court personnel)

Protocol Highlights Continued:

- ❖ Staff at The Working Centre is notified and will come and pick up the property
- ❖ The content of the property bag is reviewed and compared to the Prisoner Detain Sheet. Discrepancies are noted.
- ❖ The property bag and a copy of the release form are given to the staff from The Working Centre
- ❖ **Property Direction and Release of Liability Release of Property to The Working Centre** is signed by The Working Centre staff

Where We Are At Now

- ❖ Between March and November 2013, the option of leaving belongings with the WRPS was not being utilized often. The Working Centre was still going to Milton on a regular basis
- ❖ Why???
- ❖ The prisoners were not aware of the option to leave belongings at court

Currently...

- ❖ Steps have been taken to make Defense Counsel and prisoners more aware of the property options
- ❖ Signs are being posted in the prisoner interview area that are visible to both prisoners and counsel (at the same time). Posters and release forms are also more visible to Defense Counsel

Going to Maplehurst and Vanier

Store your property in Kitchener

Contact your lawyer for the form

Upon your release contact Joe Bauman
at 519 579-0457

Who is eligible?

- Those with new charges and first court appearances
- Those able to arrange pick up within 90 days



Going to Maplehurst or Vanier

Store your property in Kitchener

Ask Your Lawyer about the Property Release and Direction Form

Is your client going to Maplehurst or Vanier?

To store property in Kitchener fill out property direction and release of liability form.*

Eligibility Requirements

1. Person newly arrested
2. Person can arrange for pickup within 90 days

*Forms are posted on the wall at the entrance to the lawyer consultation rooms.

Thank you
Questions??