



## Enhancing Harm Reduction to Reduce Sexually Transmitted and Bloodborne Infections (STBBI): Prison Needle Exchange in the Correctional Service of Canada.

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### BACKGROUND

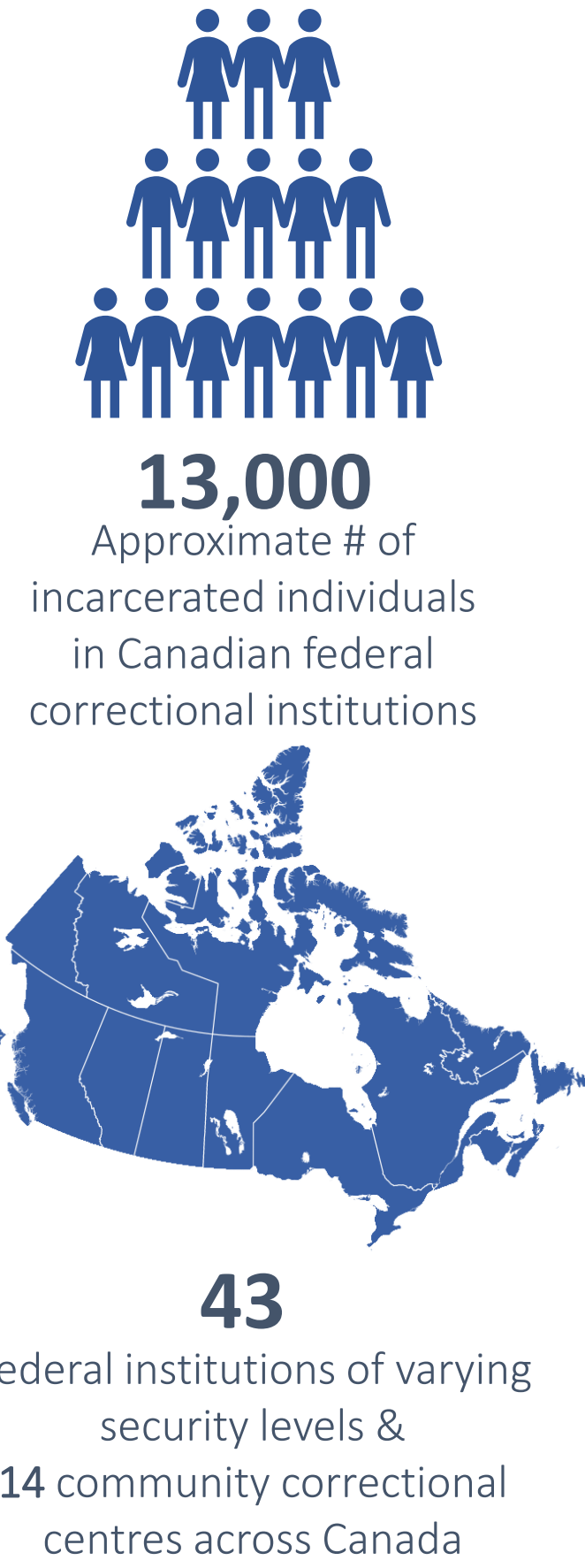
#### Canadian Context

Canada has a publicly-funded health care system.

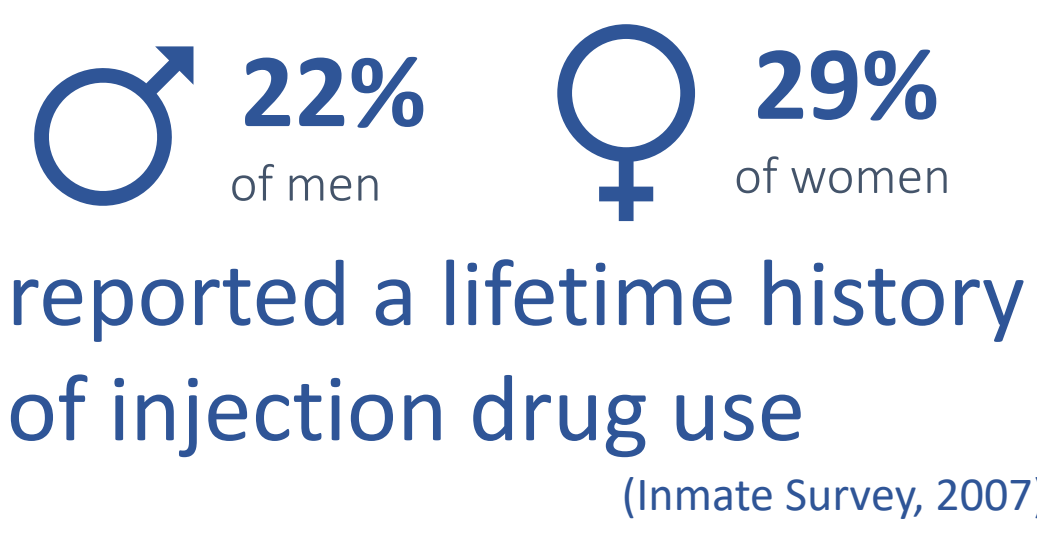
- Health services and public health are delivered by the provinces and territories in Canada for Canadians.
- Health Services for federally incarcerated persons fall under the jurisdiction of the federal government.

#### Correctional Service of Canada (CSC)

- CSC is the federal government agency in Canada responsible for administering court-imposed sentences of two years or more.
- CSC is responsible for providing essential health services to offenders in accordance with professionally accepted standards.
  - This includes access to screening and treatment for sexually transmitted and blood borne infections (STBBI). CSC's harm reduction activities have helped prevent the spread of infectious diseases, such as HIV/AIDS and HCV.



#### Injection Drug Use among Incarcerated Individuals



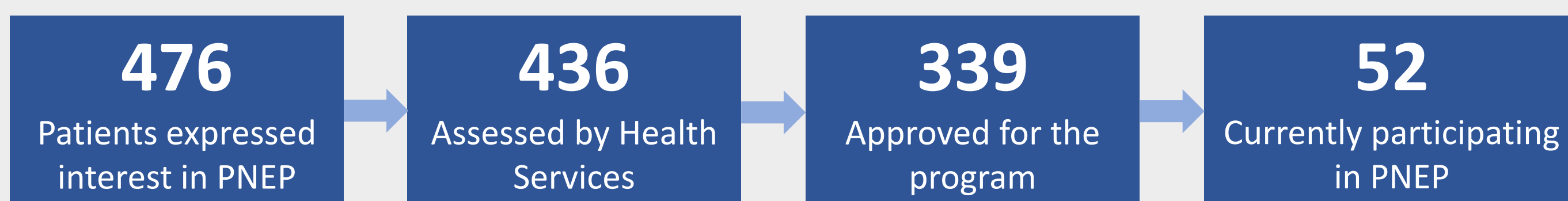
• Data from standardized CSC assessments on intake (Computerized Assessment of Substance Abuse [CASA]) have been consistent over time. Reported history of injection drug use:

- Between 2002-2009: 21%
- 2013-2014: 21%

- Studies based on the self-reported health status of federally sentenced offenders at intake found that 27% of women and 21% of men reported ever having injected drugs
- Among incarcerated individuals who receive follow up testing for HCV, those who reported injection drug use were **nearly 10x more likely to acquire HCV**
- Injection drug use while incarcerated was attributable to **47% of new HCV infections in CSC**

### RESULTS

#### Participation – Prison Needle Exchange Program (as of 2023-Feb-20)



#### Participation – Overdose Prevention Service (as of 2023-Feb-28)



Prevalence of HCV among CSC inmates has **declined** from **21.0%** in 2010 to **3.2%** in 2021

In 2019/2020 There were **174 non-fatal** overdose incidents in federal custody<sup>1</sup>

PNEP is offered in 9 sites and OPS is offered in 1 site

#### HIV Prevalence 2000-2020



### ABSTRACT

**Background:** Correctional Service Canada (CSC) is responsible for providing essential health care for people incarcerated in federal correctional institutions in Canada. This includes access to screening and treatment for sexually transmitted and blood borne infections (STBBI). CSC's harm reduction activities have helped prevent the spread of infectious diseases, such as HIV/AIDS and HCV. Implemented since 2018 and currently available in 9 federal correctional institutions, the Prison Needle Exchange Program (PNEP) is a significant and unique initiative included in CSC's suite of harm reduction services.

**Methods:** Existing policies and procedures are evaluated with the goal of improving health outcomes. The harm reduction approach focuses on minimizing the negative consequences (harms) associated with drug use rather than eliminating the behaviour itself. These are intervention programs designed to improve the health of people who use drugs. Interdisciplinary work is in place and is constantly being improved, bringing about systemic changes to support the health of people admitted to federal correctional facilities who use substances. In addition, CSC monitors evidence associated with HCV and HIV.

**Results:** Since 2018, there have been considerable enhancements to the availability and uptake of harm reduction services offered, including PNEP. CSC continue to enhance our ability to track evidence-based data related to CSC's harm reduction initiatives and STBBI and their impacts. In addition, consultation and outreach to those affected by substance use in CSC is undertaken to ensure the services are meeting their needs.

**Conclusions:** The review and monitoring of our services demonstrates progress towards improving accessibility and understanding of harm reduction.

### HARM REDUCTION

CSC offers a number of harm reduction programs and services, including:

- Bleach/Condoms/Dental Dams
- Alcohols Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous
- Peer Support
- Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis
- Prison Needle Exchange Services (9 sites)
- Overdose Prevention Services (1 site)
- SMART psychosocial interventions
- Naloxone



Image 1: Prison Needle Exchange Kit

### CONCLUSION

- Culture of continuous quality improvement to bring about systemic changes to support the health of people admitted to federal correctional facilities who use substances.
- Continuing work to understand how stigma has shaped health service delivery and the consequences on patients and staff, including those with problematic substance use.
- Continuing expansion of the PNEP and OPS services, based on a review of population health data and prevalence of BBSTI and substance use risk behaviours.
- A patient-partner approach is critical to harm reduction and the management of substance use and infectious diseases.
- Important role for continuing education and knowledge development for staff.

#### References

- Andrew Woodard, Research in brief, Overdose Incidents in Federal Custody, 2019/2020
- Research Snippet "Prevalence of Injection Drug Use among Male Offenders". October 2010, Number 10-2
- Research in Brief "Lifetime Substance Use Patterns of Men Offenders", February 2015, Number 14-43
- Emerging Research Results "Self-Reported Physical Health Status of Incoming Federally-Sentenced Women Offenders: Comparison to Men Offenders", March 2014, Number 14-5
- HCV Repeat Testing and Seroconversion (<https://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/publications/005007-3039-eng.shtml>)