



Prisoners' Legal Services

A Project of the West Coast Prison Justice Society

October 21, 2022

VIA EMAIL

Anne Kelly, Commissioner
Correctional Service Canada
340 Laurier Avenue West
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0P9

Dear Ms. Kelly:

RE: COVID Lockdown at Mission Medium Institution

I write regarding the current lockdown at Mission Medium Institution ("Mission"), implemented due to a COVID-19 outbreak. Today is the 10th day of the lockdown.

The restrictive conditions reported by our clients are alarming. We understand that the lockdown routine allows for each person to have only 20 minutes out of their cell each day, by themselves. In reality, the situation is worse as clients report being allowed only 10 to 15 minutes outside of their cells. One client reported that although the people on his unit had recovered from COVID by day seven, their extreme isolation continues.

All programming, activities, jobs and library access have come to a halt. Visits have also been discontinued and meals are cold with no opportunity to heat them up. After much protesting, people in one unit were allowed to have one peer collect everyone's laundry to wash. They report having to choose between making a phone call or taking a shower during their 10 to 15 minutes of tier time.

Under Commissioner's Directive 822 - Medical Isolation and Modified Routine for COVID-19, the Institutional Head has the authority to impose "Modified Routine for Health Purposes". However, the conditions of such a modified routine include reasonable efforts to provide people opportunities to be "out of their cell to attend activities of daily living (e.g., to shower), as well as yard time, access to telephone calls, and interaction with others on the range, with appropriate infection and control measures in place". It further notes that people be "provided access to educational materials, programming and spiritual services in accordance with the Integrated Risk Management Framework."

CSC is charged with ensuring that the modified routine for health purposes is implemented for the “shortest amount of time clinically required”.

It appears that the current lockdown at Mission is not only a breach of the policies set out under CD 822, it is also in stark contrast to the current community public health guidelines. The BC Centre for Disease Control recommends people self-isolate until their symptoms resolve, or if vaccinated and not showing symptoms, for only five days. Using a one-size fits all strategy of placing everyone under lockdown does not meet public health criteria for COVID-19 isolation.

As we in the community continue to progress toward fewer and fewer COVID-19 related restrictions, so too must people in prison be able to return to a sense of normalcy. COVID-19 must not be used by CSC to justify inhumane conditions of solitary confinement, especially when there is no scientific basis for a period of isolation this long.

The overly restrictive measures being employed against people in custody at Mission infringes upon their rights under section 7 and 12 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. We call on your office to improve upon the existing conditions and lift the lockdown measures immediately.

Please feel free to contact me if you would like to discuss this matter.

Yours truly,

PRISONERS’ LEGAL SERVICES

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Jennifer Metcalfe', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jennifer Metcalfe
Executive Director

cc: Shawn Huish, Warden Mission-Medium (via email)