



2019 Provincial Election Questionnaire

WOMEN IN PRISON

Prisons are at a crisis point in this province. The Correctional Centre for Women in Clarenville is overcrowded and two women have died in custody in the past year.

What will you do to address overcrowding in prisons, as well as address the mental health and addictions needs of women in custody?

Liberal Party of Newfoundland and Labrador:

In an effort to inform strategies on improving the criminal justice system, our government held five justice summits between March 2017 and September 2018 in St. John's, Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Gander, Corner Brook, and Marystown. These summits brought together representation from every level of court, federal and provincial corrections, police, representatives across all divisions of the Department of Justice and Public Safety, members of the legal community, Indigenous groups and community organizations for open and productive dialogue on system challenges and opportunities.

Five issues were identified:

1. Lack of alternative processes;
2. Transportation and geography issues;
3. Court related delays;
4. Lack of mental health and addictions services; and,
5. Issues regarding staffing.

Since the first summit in 2017, our government has made strides in addressing the issues and challenges put forth by stakeholders, and we will continue to focus our efforts on addressing the issues identified.

We are committed to replacing Her Majesty's Penitentiary in St. John's. A new correctional facility is long overdue and will provide a space for the rehabilitation of

inmates and a safer work environment for staff. Construction for the \$200 million facility is set to start in 2022 and this large project will prove to be a significant boost to the construction and trades industry. Budget 2019 has earmarked \$600,000 towards replacing Her Majesty's Penitentiary.

We are also allocating \$1 million to expand the Labrador Correctional Centre in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, which will increase capacity and the potential to allow for women to be housed at the facility, closer to children and family members.

As critically necessary as a new prison is, we recognize a robust justice system is more than housing and rehabilitating inmates. It is also about reducing crime and minimizing the number of inmates in a correctional facility.

Last fall, our government opened a new Drug Treatment Court, which employs a problem solving, therapeutic approach and alternative to traditional criminal justice responses by addressing the underlying issues that contribute to crime. Budget 2019 is investing \$242,000 in this court, which will be offset by federal funding.

Budget 2019 is investing \$254,000 in electronic monitoring and \$100,000 for a bail supervision program.

We are committed to implementing restorative justice initiatives where appropriate, like an adult diversion program, to help repair the harm caused by crime and to implementing alternative approaches within the justice system.

As a government, we are committed to better services and better outcomes, and we recognize the urgency of reforming mental health and addictions care in this province to address gaps in our system, strengthen existing programs and services, and break down the barriers of stigma and timely access. Our Towards Recovery Action is a solid one, complete with budgets, timelines and accountability and performance monitoring mechanisms. Through this plan, we are demonstrating our commitment to mental health promotion and early intervention, and it is our hope that these actions will prevent some people from coming into contact with the criminal justice system in the first place.

Our government commissioned the report "Newfoundland and Labrador Corrections and Community Services: Deaths in Custody Review" to improve the delivery of services and practices within adult custody. We have accepted in principle the recommendations of the report, and work is ongoing to address the issues identified.

We are committed to ensuring equity in healthcare access for inmates and a system that integrates their health needs through all stages of custody.

We are transitioning over responsibility for health care within adult correctional facilities from the Department of Justice and Public Safety to the regional health authority through the Department of Health and Community Services. Both departments have been working closely regarding implementation. This change will see more comprehensive health services offered to inmates that are consistent with those found in the community.

Since the announcement of the transition, Eastern Health has placed a second addictions position at Her Majesty's Penitentiary and the regional health authorities have begun offering the DoorWays Program single session therapy services at all correctional facilities.

Additionally, in collaboration with Stella's Circle and the Newfoundland and Labrador Correctional Center for Women, a form of Dialectic Behavioural Therapy is now being offered to offenders at the institution. The program also offers training sessions for correctional staff to familiarize themselves with this form of therapy. This initiative falls in line with our commitment to offer greater mental health supports to offenders.

We recognize that while there is significant work already happening on these fronts, much remains to be done to improve the system

Progressive Conservative Party of Newfoundland and Labrador:

We will establish a much-needed new correctional facility in the appropriate location.

We will review the recent deaths of inmates at correctional facilities in greater depth and take measures to ensure the operations at our current and replacement facilities accord with our mental health and addictions strategies and the findings of reports on our corrections and justice systems.

We will ensure the mental health and addictions care of inmates of our correctional centres reflects the recommendations of the Jesso report on inmate deaths.

We will ensure the challenges of mental health and addictions treatment are subject to intense critical review and evolve in line with best practices. We will improve access to mental health care and addictions treatment as per the recommendations of the report of the all-party committee on mental health and addictions. We will consult on the most effective measures we can take to improve access to mental health and addictions

services, including Suboxone treatment, and specialty appointments dealing with issues of mental health and addictions.

We will open a broader public discussion about community drug issues, and work collaboratively with policing agencies, the health care sector, community groups, frontline professionals and others to find solutions that will protect our people and make our communities safer.

A Crosbie government will be fully supportive of a new mental health hospital and will consult with appropriate health providers and mental health advocates to ensure the design and location will meet both current and future needs. These buildings are expensive, so we must get it right.

A Crosbie government will not cut health funding. Mental health and addictions will be given equal status to other areas of health care.

We will explore opportunities to improve access to psychiatrists and psychotherapy.

We will examine ways to complement the Doorways walk-in mental health service program by using telehealth more effectively to offer online services. This will improve access to non-emergency mental health services and counselling.

Newfoundland and Labrador New Democratic Party:

Most women in our correctional institutions are victims of violence and need trauma-informed services and mental health counselling.

There should be greater access to mental health and drug courts, and to the community services prescribed by these courts. Bail supervision with community support is better than endless months of incarceration awaiting trial.

Women serving sentences need educational upgrading while in prison, and they need safe, supportive housing when they leave.

We support the Jesso report recommendation for a female offender strategy that would include gender- and trauma-informed interventions, programs and services (Deaths in Custody Review).

NL Alliance:

As you may know, a replacement for HMP in St. John's has been called for over the past number of years. We feel that the replacement of HMP should be the cornerstone for a

revamped justice system in the province. We need to focus on recovery, not incarceration. As mentioned before, often times the reasons for incarceration are the underlying causes plaguing many. We should work with our partners in the federal government to ensure that the replacement of HMP is an effective facility to help rejuvenate all who find themselves there. It should contain areas for male and female prisoners, along with mental health and addictions resources for everyone incarcerated there. It should also contain space to allow for training and education, to help individuals achieve new opportunities they thought may have been lost because of their past actions.