



To: To: Lilian Kordic, Institutional Head
Edmonton Institution for Women
11151 178 St NW Unit 1, Edmonton, AB T5S 2H9

March 31st, 2026

Dear Lil,

I want to thank the members of the Institutional Management Team (IMT) at the Edmonton Institution for Women (EIFW) for taking the time to meet with me and Chanelle Lajoie on February 24th via Teams.

This letter summarizes reports received and conditions observed during Chanelle's visit to the Edmonton Institution for Women on February 21st and 22nd and provides summaries of the discussion between the Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies (CAEFS) and members of IMT following the visit, the relevant laws and policies, and CAEFS' recommendations.

We look forward to your response.

Respectfully,

Jacqueline Omstead
Senior Advocate

Finance: Allocation and Access to Funds

Description: CAEFS received multiple reports that earnings from school and work are being incorrectly deposited into individuals' savings accounts rather than being divided between current and savings accounts as required by policy. As a result, people report that they must use one of their four annual transfers to move money into their current accounts in order to meet day-to-day needs such as canteen items and phone calls. Many believe these errors may be linked to newly hired staff, and shared that they were discouraged from filing grievances while staff are still learning their roles. CAEFS was also told that refunds for Amazon orders are taking up to six months to be processed, further limiting people's ability to access necessary funds and make essential purchases.

Discussion: The IMT confirmed that new staff are currently fulfilling the CSC finance roles. CAEFS and the IMT discussed transfer practices at EIFW, and the IMT committed to following up on the concerns raised regarding income allocations. The IMT also agreed to look into the delays associated with processing refunds.

Law & Policy:

CCRA s. 4 (c): the Service uses the least restrictive measures consistent with the protection of society, staff members and [incarcerated persons].

CCRA, s.78 (1): For the purpose of (a) encouraging [incarcerated people] to participate in programs provided by the Service, or (b) providing financial assistance to [incarcerated people] to facilitate their reintegration into the community, the Commissioner may authorize payments to [incarcerated people] at rates approved by the Treasury Board.

CD 860 s. (4): Ninety percent of the balance of the [incarcerated person's] income, following the deductions outlined in the Deductions section in this policy, will be deposited in the [incarcerated person's] current account. (5) The 10% balance will be deposited in the [incarcerated person's] savings account. 860 (6) Notwithstanding the above, where the [incarcerated person's] income exceeds the top gross [incarcerated person's] pay level of \$69 per pay period, the amount to be deposited in the [incarcerated person's] current account will not exceed \$69. The balance will be deposited in the savings account.

CAEFS' Recommendation: CAEFS recommends that EIFW ensure income allocations are administered in full compliance with CD 860, and that individuals are supported to use the grievance process when errors occur, as this is a legislated and necessary mechanism for documenting concerns and seeking corrective action. These misallocations occur within a broader system of enforced poverty produced within CSC penitentiaries, where low daily compensation rates and limited autonomy over personal funds already undermine financial stability, dignity, and access to necessities. CAEFS suggests implementing timely corrective measures, promptly processing refunds, and ensuring that financial practices are consistent with the least-restrictive principles set out in the CCRA.



Access to Conditional Release: Escorted and Unescorted Temporary Absences

Description: CAEFS continued to receive reports that Escorted Temporary Absences (ETAs) are not being reliably facilitated. People shared that they believe access to ETAs may be limited because the current volunteer roster is only able to support travel to a small number of locations. Individuals reported that limited access to ETAs is hindering their ability to progress in their correctional plans and prepare for reintegration, and that it also restricts their opportunities to be supported for Unescorted Temporary Absences (UTAs). People serving long sentences noted that inconsistent access to ETAs is especially impactful given their extended timelines to UTA or day parole eligibility and their need to maintain community connections.

Discussion: The IMT shared that the Volunteer Coordinator at EIFW is working to address these reported concerns.

Law & Policy:

CCRA s.3: The purpose of the federal correctional system is to contribute to the maintenance of a just, peaceful and safe society by... (b) assisting the rehabilitation of [people in prison] and their reintegration into the community as law-abiding citizens through the provision of programs in penitentiaries and in the community.

CCRA s. 17(1)(b): The institutional head may [...] authorize the temporary absence of an [incarcerated person], other than an [incarcerated person] described in subsection 17.1(1), if the [incarcerated person] is escorted by a staff member or other person authorized by the institutional head and, in the opinion of the institutional head [...] it is desirable for the [incarcerated person] to be absent from the penitentiary for [...] family contact, including parental responsibilities, personal development for rehabilitative purposes or compassionate reasons.

Creating Choices, Principle #5 (Shared Responsibility): “In order to develop the support systems and continuity of service which will enable women to take responsibility for their lives, federally sentenced women must be integrated within their communities. To accomplish this goal, the responsibilities which federally sentenced women have for children and other family members in the community must be recognized and supported.”

CAEFS’ Recommendation: Ensuring consistent access to reintegration opportunities through temporary absences, including ETAs and UTAs, aligns with CSC’s legislated purpose, as conditional release provides the strongest pathway to successful reintegration and reflects the principles of Creating Choices. The Parole Board of Canada emphasizes that gradual, structured release—known as the continuum of release—is the most effective approach to community reintegration. CAEFS is encouraged to hear that the Volunteer Coordinator is working to address these concerns, and recommends that alternative arrangements be explored to ensure reliable and equitable access to these essential reintegration opportunities.

Healthcare: Changes to Medication

Description: CAEFS received reports that an individual is experiencing severe impacts on her mental, physical, and emotional wellbeing following changes to medication dosage occurring without consultation, despite reporting adverse side effects. CAEFS also heard from individuals receiving Opioid Agonist Therapy (OAT) that they were not informed that alternatives to Sublocade remained available following the shift in the National Formulary identifying Sublocade as the preferred option. This lack of information led some to believe that Sublocade was their only treatment choice, despite having expressed concerns to health care providers about the switch and the potential or actual adverse impacts on their overall health and wellbeing.



Discussion: The IMT and CAEFS discussed individual concerns, including barriers that make it difficult for people to raise issues with health care, as well as the steep learning curve faced by those who are new to federal incarceration—particularly individuals who are elderly or have cognitive disabilities. Health care staff offered to follow up with the individual discussed. The IMT also agreed to follow up on the reported concerns related to OAT and how information about treatment options was or could be communicated.

Law & Policy:

CCRA s. 4(d): [People who are incarcerated] retain the rights of all members of society except those that are, as a consequence of the sentence, lawfully and necessarily removed or restricted.

CCRA s. 4(g): Correctional policies, programs and practices respect gender, ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic differences, sexual orientation and gender identity and expression, and are responsive to the special needs of women, Indigenous persons, visible minorities, persons requiring mental health care and other groups.

CCRA s. 86 (1): The Service shall provide every [incarcerated person] with (a) essential health care; and (b) reasonable access to non-essential health care.

CD 800 s.2: The Regional Director, Health Services, will ensure: (a) the provision of health services to [incarcerated persons] in Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) institutions and in the community, in accordance with relevant legislation, professionally accepted standards, CSC policies and practice directives; (b) implementation of procedures to monitor and evaluate the quality and timeliness of health services and in a manner that promotes patient safety and quality improvement.

CAEFS' Recommendation: Considering CSC's unique responsibility to provide safe and humane custody to people in federal penitentiaries, and wherein those same people are reliant on penitentiary staff and contractors to provide health services, referrals, emergency care, timeframes etc., CAEFS urges CSC to adopt additional measures to protect the dignity and well-being of those in its care. Access to appropriate, trauma-informed health care is essential, not only to meet community standards but also to support meaningful engagement in correctional plans and successful reintegration.

Lack of Meaningful Consultation on Transfers and Placements

Description: CAEFS received reports from an individual who was informed that she would be released to an out-of-province Community Residential Facility at statutory release, due to limited local options and a perceived lack of exploration of sections 81 and 84 earlier in her sentence. She shared that she was not adequately consulted in this decision and expressed concerns about language barriers and the distance from her traditional cultural teachings, Land, and family supports.

Another individual reported that she was involuntarily transferred from a higher to a lower security classification while mid-program, despite requesting that the move be delayed so she could complete the program and avoid restarting it. She further reported that she has not yet been able to access programming at the lower security level, which has confirmed her concerns about how the transfer would affect her correctional plan.



Finally, CAEFS heard that an individual's request to move to another living unit following an alleged assault by a peer was not facilitated. Although the other individual was eventually moved, the person who reported experiencing harm shared that she felt unsafe in the interim due to the delay in action and her inability to relocate.

Discussion: CAEFS and the IMT discussed the specifics of each of the concerns outlined above. The IMT provided additional information regarding CSC's scope of responsibilities and relevant policies. They also shared that admittance into core programming will soon move to a rolling-basis system, which they anticipate will reduce disruptions and support more timely program completion. The IMT offered to follow up directly with individuals, where requested.

Law & Policy:

CCRA s. 15.1 (1): The institutional head shall cause a correctional plan to be developed in consultation with the [federally sentenced person] as soon as practicable after their reception in a penitentiary.

CCRA s. 28: If a person is or is to be confined in a penitentiary, the Service shall take all reasonable steps to ensure that the penitentiary in which they are confined is one that provides them with the least restrictive environment for that person, taking into account [...] (c) the availability of appropriate programs and services and the person's willingness to participate in those programs.

CCRA s. 70: The Service shall take all reasonable steps to ensure that penitentiaries, the penitentiary environment, the living and working conditions of [incarcerated people] are safe, healthful and free of practices that undermine a person's sense of personal dignity.

CAEFS' Recommendation: CAEFS recommends that EIFW ensure that all decisions related to movement, transfers, and release planning are made in meaningful consultation with the individuals affected and in ways that are aligned with the principle of least-restrictive measures. Clear communication and timely decision-making are essential to preventing disruptions to correctional plans and ensuring safe, dignified living conditions. CAEFS further urges EIFW to explore all viable local and culturally appropriate options, including sections 81 and 84 releases, so that individuals can remain connected to their supports and communities whenever possible.

