

## Dorchester Penitentiary

After over one hundred years of service as a maximum security institution, the venerable old Dorchester Penitentiary is taking on a new look for the 1990s, thanks to a major redevelopment program currently under way. Dorchester has evolved into a multilevel, multipurpose institution with an offender population of approximately 253.

A study conducted by Chefurka and Associates has been approved for guiding program direction at Dorchester Penitentiary, which includes the services of a developing Regional Treatment Centre. By 1993, the Regional Treatment Centre will consist of a 50-bed psychiatric unit, which will operate an assessment program, an acute psychiatric care unit, a chronic care unit and a transitional care section. Assessment and treatment of mentally ill offenders will be part of the centre's mandate.

Dorchester's main orientation will be to deliver several intensive therapeutic programs to offenders with addictions, learning disabilities and mental disorders, sex offenders, and inmates with anger management problems. The integrated, multidisciplinary model of the Regional Treatment Centre will target the general institutional population and thus offer management advantages in efficiency and cost effectiveness (sharing of staff, services, program facilities, etc.).

The intensive programming will allow more cases to be treated as outpatients while remaining within the prison population. The psychiatric unit role will be limited to the diagnosis and treatment of mentally ill offenders.

The Dorchester organization is a three-pronged model comprising the Correctional Operations Division, Treatment and Programs Division (which includes the Treatment Centre) and Management Services Division, reporting to the Warden. Within Dorchester, the Unit Management model will operate with three units, one of which will be the Psychiatric Treatment Centre.

The Treatment Centre currently operates at a 20-bed capacity with a 37-member staff, composed of 11 correctional officers, 18 nurses, 3 part-time psychiatrists and 5 psychologists (2 of whom are part-time), who service the whole population of Dorchester Penitentiary. All institutional programs are now directed by the Treatment and Programs Division.

A current priority is the development, by the psychologists, of a comprehensive sex offender treatment program (beginning September 1990) to complement other programs in the Region. Dorchester Penitentiary is becoming fully equipped to meet the serious challenges that the Atlantic Region faces in dealing effectively with the needs of special categories of offenders in the 1990s. The developments in Dorchester and its Psychiatric Treatment Centre will play a pivotal role in promoting activities to enhance mental health and prevent mental disorder.

These activities will ultimately result in a substantial increase in the services available to incarcerated offenders in these special categories.