



# Mental Health Strategy

## QUICK FACTS

**I**mproving the capacity to address the mental health needs of offenders is a corporate priority for the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC), as we continue to enhance our contributions to public safety.

CSC provides essential health care and reasonable access to non-essential mental health care services to incarcerated federal offenders.

### HIGH PREVALENCE

There has been a considerable increase in the number of offenders experiencing mental health problems upon admission to CSC facilities. Among men, rates have risen by 86 per cent and among women rates have increased by 85 per cent since 1997. As of 2008, 13 per cent of male offenders and 24 per cent of women offenders are identified as having a mental health disorder at intake.

Offenders often suffer from more than one mental health problem and have concurrent substance abuse issues as well.

### NEW INITIATIVES

CSC has developed a comprehensive strategy to enhance the capacity to address and respond to the mental health needs of offenders in institutions and in the community. This *Mental Health Strategy* includes the following components:

- Introduction of clinical mental health screening for offenders entering the federal correctional system;
- implementation of primary mental health care in institutions, including mental health counselling, support, treatment and maintenance;

- development of intermediate care units for male offenders with mental health issues in institutions;
- enhancement of clinical staffing ratios in CSC's Regional Treatment Centres;
- improved community partnerships with other correctional and mental health jurisdictions; and
- provision of mental health training to mental health professionals and correctional staff.

In 2005, CSC received funding to enhance community mental health services over a five-year period. These funds are being directed towards strengthening the continuum and continuity of specialized mental health support in the community. This is called the *Community Mental Health Initiative* (<http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/text/pblct/qf/17-eng.shtml>).

In 2007, CSC received interim funding to initiate key components of the *Institutional Mental Health Initiative*. In 2008, CSC received ongoing funding to enhance institutional mental health services. These funds are primarily being directed towards mental health screening at intake and primary care for offenders, forming part of the *Institutional Mental Health Initiative* (<http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/text/pblct/qf/29-eng.shtml>).

### THE WAY FORWARD

CSC is examining ways to ensure that high-quality mental health services for offenders are sustainable over the long-term. A focus on funding issues, greater recruitment and retention of health professionals, and improved co-ordination with community partners will all help address the future mental health needs of offenders.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information on CSC's Mental Health Strategy, please visit our Web site at [www.csc-scc.gc.ca](http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca).

January 2010

