

## Community residential centres in Quebec: A tripartite agreement

In public administration, the current "hot" management methods are accountability, empowerment, restructuring, partnership and cultural change. The tripartite (three partners) agreement on the use of Quebec community residential centres is an initiative that features all of these favoured management methods.

Quebec Region's administration of community residences for offenders is also unique in Canada. For example, the rates paid to operators of community residential facilities are negotiated jointly by the Correctional Service of Canada, the Direction générale des services correctionnels du Québec, and their community partners. As well, minimum standards have been developed for all community residential facilities, and the finding for accommodation resources is based on services rendered and not on a guaranteed minimum. This too is unique to Quebec Region and the tripartite agreement.

What is the origin of this agreement? What is it, exactly? To answer these questions properly, we must go back to the 1970s. Community residential centres In 1969, an amendment to the Parole Act led to what is today known as day parole. Under this type of parole, an offender must return to prison or a community residential centre each evening. Therefore, as day parole use grew, so did the need for centres for offender accommodation and supervision.

In 1973, William Outerbridge, a professor of criminology at the University of Ottawa (who later became chairperson of the National Parole Board), conducted a study of community-based residential centres. He predicted a stronger demand for these centres as a result of day parole and proposed that both levels of government work together with the private sector to reach agreements on the operation of community based residential centres in each region.

Following this report, the Secretariat of the Solicitor General of Canada organized a national forum on community-based residential centres. At the conclusion of this forum, the privately run Quebec centres formed the Association des membres des centres résidentiels communautaires du Québec, a move facilitated by the fact that the majority of the centres were already members of the Quebec Association of Social Rehabilitation Agencies. Regional joint committees At a federal-provincial conference in December 1973, the Canadian federal and provincial ministers responsible for corrections agreed to create joint committees for the coordination of correctional services, facilities and resources (including both institutional and community programs) in every region of the country. These committees could identify their own objectives, priorities and work methods and determine the best means of their implementation.

The first meeting of Quebec's regional joint committee was held in Québec City, in October 1974. The participants were executives from the National Parole Board, the Quebec Department of Justice, the Canadian Penitentiary Service, and the National Parole Service (the latter two would later merge to form the Correctional Service of Canada).

The committee identified four priorities: exchange of inmates, personnel training, offenders with mental health problems, and community-based residential centres. This last priority led to the creation of an

accreditation committee.

It is worth noting that the joint committee eventually came to be made up of representatives of the Correctional Service of Canada, the Direction générale des services correctionnels du Québec, the National Parole Board, the Commission québécoise des libérations conditionnelles, and the Ministry Secretariat of the Solicitor General of Canada. The accreditation committee's mandate was to develop policies for community residential centres and to plan and coordinate correctional activities related to the use of community resources.

In February 1979, the regional joint committee approved minimum requirements for community residential centres, as formulated by the accreditation committee. The philosophy of the centres was stated as follows:

"Every resident of a community residential centre, whether an offender or ex-inmate, on probation or parole, must be able to benefit from a humane residential service, based on a program that will gradually enable him (or her) to succeed in conducting himself (or herself) as a responsible citizen in their target community...." [translation]

The accreditation committee and the Association des membres des centres résidentiels communautaires du Québec then each conducted their own study to identify the costs of implementing these requirements. Finally, in January 1981, the two levels of government and the Association des membres des centres résidentiels communautaires du Québec approved a tripartite agreement. The agreement was the result of the combined efforts of many participants, all wanting to move in the same direction.

However, nothing was signed at the ministerial or deputy ministerial level to provide a framework for the agreement. Consequently, this was a purely administrative rather than political agreement.

Implementation In 1987, the Association des membres des centres résidentiels communautaires du Québec asked to join the regional joint committee, but in view of the variety of issues covered by the committee, a tripartite committee - made up of representatives of the executive committee of the Association des résidences communautaires du Québec (formerly the Association des membres des centres résidentiels communautaires du Québec), the Direction générale des services correctionnels du Québec, and the Correctional Service of Canada-was formed instead.

The principal tasks of the tripartite committee are to reassess funding for residential resources (in general) and all standards applicable to them, to exchange information, and to inform the regional joint committee about the condition of, and level of funding for, community residential centres. An effective partnership The tripartite agreement has meant an expansion of partnerships in the field of corrections - the various arms of the two levels of government have been consulting each other and exchanging information regularly for more than 20 years, and the private sector is also now fully involved in the process of negotiating the daily rates paid by the two levels of government to operators of community residential centres.

There is no question that this excellent initiative has yielded positive results and made possible a

partnership between two levels of government and the public and private sectors.

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