



Audit at a glance

Why we did this audit

- Colonialism and discrimination have caused socio-economic inequities that have led to an overrepresentation of Indigenous people in the justice system.
- Indigenous people account for 35 per cent of individuals held in B.C. correctional centres, but only six per cent of the general population are Indigenous people.
- Between 2019 and 2021, about 90 per cent of Indigenous men and women in provincial custody had a diagnosed mental health and/or substance use disorder.
- Since 2017, the Provincial Health Services Authority has been responsible for providing health care, including mental health and substance use services, in B.C.'s 10 correctional centres.

Objective

To determine whether the Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA) provides Indigenous clients in correctional centres, who are diagnosed with a mental health and/or substance use disorder, with access to required health services.

Audit period

January 1, 2019 – December 31, 2021

Conclusion

The PHSA did not consistently provide Indigenous clients in correctional centres who are diagnosed with a mental health and/or substance use disorder with access to required mental health and substance use services.

The PHSA has accepted the four recommendations we made to enhance its internal reporting and oversight of mental health and substance use services in B.C. correctional centres.

What we found

The PHSA is not monitoring Indigenous clients' access to services

- The PHSA's current health information system cannot produce reports on Indigenous clients' access to services, resulting in an overall lack of monitoring and oversight of clients' access to services.
- As a result, this audit had to rely on a sample of 92 client files to examine access to services.

Recommendations 1 and 2

Most Indigenous clients were screened on time for mental health and substance use needs

- Ninety-three per cent of the files reviewed showed that clients were screened for mental health and substance use disorders within the PHSA's standard 48-hour time frame after they entered the correctional system.

No recommendation

Audit at a glance *(continued)*

Nearly one third of Indigenous clients did not receive immediate services

- Sixty-three per cent of clients in our sample received services for all or some of their needs within 72 hours.
- Twenty-eight per cent of clients did not receive services for needs identified in their initial screening. There was no rationale given for why this was the case.
- Nine per cent of clients declined services.

Recommendations 1, 2 and 3

Full care plans were completed for less than half of Indigenous clients

- Full care plans that addressed all clients' needs were done for 40 per cent of clients in our sample and another 20 per cent had a plan for some of their needs.
- Forty per cent of clients had no care plan.
- There is no standard PHSA template for care plans.

Recommendations 1, 2 and 3

Ongoing services provided to all Indigenous clients who had a care plan, but inconsistent access for those without

- Sixty per cent of clients from our review had a full or partial care plan and received all the services in their plan.
- Twenty-two per cent of clients without a care plan also received ongoing services.
- Eighteen per cent of clients had no care plan and, except for one client, received no services during incarceration.

Recommendations 1, 2 and 3

Community discharge plans were not in place for Indigenous clients leaving facilities

- Discharge plans were done for only seven per cent of the client files sampled.
- Of the clients without a discharge plan, just over half had some evidence of planning for release (e.g., to continue receiving medications and for connections to community services).
- However, 32 clients received no discharge planning or referrals for medications or community services.

Recommendations 1, 2 and 3

Supervisors not reviewing Indigenous client files as required

- Supervisors completed less than one-third of the required reviews of intake screening tools, client files, and discharge plans.

Recommendation 4

After reading the report, you may wish to ask the following questions of government:

1. Do all clients in B.C. correctional centres face similar gaps in access to services?
2. How will the PHSA ensure that it provides continuity of health care for Indigenous people in custody, from intake to release?
3. How should key groups such as the First Nations Health Authority be involved with health-care planning and service provision for Indigenous clients in correctional centres?