
MINISTRY OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND SECURITY

4.04—Institutional Services and Young Offender Operations

(Follow-up to VFM Section 3.04, *Special Report on Accountability and Value for Money—2000*)

BACKGROUND

Since our *Special Report on Accountability and Value for Money* (2000), the Ministry of Correctional Services was consolidated with the Ministry of the Solicitor General in April 2002 to form the Ministry of Public Safety and Security. Institutional Services and Young Offender Operations (Institutional Services), which we audited in 2000, now falls under the responsibility of this new Ministry.

Institutional Services is responsible for the operation of Ontario's correctional institutions. These institutions provide custody for adult offenders sentenced to terms of up to two years less a day and for accused persons on remand awaiting trial. They also provide custody for young offenders between 16 and 17 years of age at the time of their offences.

For 2001/02, institutional services for adults and young offenders had operating expenditures of approximately \$500 million. In 1999/2000, operating expenditures were about \$463 million and there were about 6,200 staff. In the same year, on a daily basis, there were approximately 7,400 adult and 700 young offenders in 47 correctional institutions.

In 2000, we concluded that in the process of implementing an infrastructure renewal project with estimated capital costs of over \$270 million, the Ministry had not properly assessed the viability of alternative service delivery options to ensure best value to taxpayers.

In that regard, we found that:

- The Ministry's decision to finance and build two 1,200-bed correctional institutions at a cost of \$180 million was not supported by a comprehensive business case assessing the risks, costs, and benefits of all relevant alternatives.
- A proper business case and cost-benefit analysis were not done for building a new cooking facility within a correctional institution under expansion to provide prepared food to a number of correctional institutions. At the completion of our field work, the estimated cost to build the facility had increased from \$5 million to \$9.5 million. As well, the facility's production capacity would be 1,000 meals a day short of meeting the needs of the correctional institutions to be served.

In addition, despite a decline in average daily inmate count (including both adult and young offenders) since 1995/96, the operating expenditures for Institutional Services

between 1995/96 and 1999/2000 had increased 19% from \$388 million to \$463 million. Specifically, we noted that:

- The number of offenders in the Temporary Absence Program, which is designed to protect society by enabling non-violent offenders to maintain community and family relationships and responsibilities, had declined from 25,000 to 4,000 between 1991/92 and 1998/99. The under-utilization of the community program resulted in the Ministry foregoing significant potential savings of as much as \$50 million a year.
- The average number of sick days per correctional officer increased 38% from 12 days in 1995 to 16 days in 1998. Overtime expenditures increased 48% from \$11.1 million in 1996/97 to \$16.5 million in 1998/99.

We also found that about 60% of the Ministry's 47 correctional institutions had security non-compliance problems that had not been rectified for up to two years.

CURRENT STATUS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on information received from the Ministry of Public Safety and Security, the Ministry has taken action to implement the majority of our recommendations, while action is planned or in progress for the remaining recommendations. The current status of all our recommendations is as follows.

DUE REGARD FOR ECONOMY AND EFFICIENCY

Adult Infrastructure Renewal Project

Recommendation

When evaluating alternative services delivery options, the Ministry should prepare sound business cases, including needs analysis and requirement definitions, to ensure that the option chosen will result in best value to the taxpayers. At the minimum, business cases should include an assessment of:

- *the costs and benefits of all feasible alternatives;*
- *the kind of risks and the level of risks that can be transferred from the province to private-sector partners as well as how such risks should be managed; and*
- *the proper balance between the objectives of the private sector and the interests of the public.*

To ensure realization of anticipated benefits, the Ministry should establish procedures for the proper planning and implementation of the chosen service delivery option.

Current Status

No other similar projects have been approved since March 31, 2000.

Regarding the existing projects, the Ministry has turned over the operating functions of the Central North Correctional Centre in Penetanguishene and the Cook-Chill Food Facility in Maplehurst to private operators. The Ministry informed us that external consultants were hired to ensure the tendering process was fair, open, and transparent.

Privatization of Young Offender Facilities

Recommendation

To ensure proper control over payments to private service providers, the Ministry should more closely monitor the operations and billings of private-sector partners that are providing alternative services to the province.

To better ensure future outsourcing provides value for money, the Ministry should complete its evaluation of the effectiveness of the pilot project before deciding whether more young offender facilities should be turned over to private-sector operators.

Current Status

The Ministry indicated that it has implemented a tracking system to be applied to alternate service delivery initiatives that continuously monitors operations and billings of private-sector partners to ensure they are appropriate.

With respect to pilot projects involving young offenders, an evaluation report prepared by an external consultant in 2002 indicated that Project Turnaround was effective in meeting a number of performance measures, including the lowering of the rate of recidivism of young offenders. The Ministry is reviewing the young offender capital plans and the results of a supply-and-demand analysis for young offender facilities. Private-sector involvement will be reviewed within the context of this review.

Community Programs

Recommendation

To afford non-violent inmates better opportunities for successful reintegration into the community and to reduce institutional expenditures, the Ministry should make more effective use of community programs.

Current Status

The Temporary Absence Program has continued to be underutilized since our last audit report. In January 2002, the Ontario Parole and Earned Release Board was given responsibility for all unescorted temporary absences lasting 72 hours and longer.

By February 2002, the Ministry had hired 165 new probation and parole officers and had issued a request for proposal to expand the Electronic Surveillance Program so that more offenders can be monitored in the community.

The Ministry indicated to us that it was developing better programs to help inmates reintegrate successfully into the community. However, the changes in the Temporary Absence and Electronic Surveillance programs are in the early stages of implementation. Therefore, the Ministry is currently unable to assess the full impact of these changes on inmates' successful reintegration into the community and whether institutional expenditures have actually been reduced.

Staffing—Attendance

Recommendation

The Ministry should strengthen its efforts in monitoring sick leave and, where warranted, take appropriate corrective action to deal with any problems.

Current Status

The Ministry has implemented various guidelines, policies, and procedures to address attendance problems. For example, the Human Resources Branch has been staffed with four case management co-ordinators for attendance management. A local attendance contact position has been established at each correctional institution and probation and parole area for the purpose of co-ordinating the monitoring of attendance.

The Ministry indicated it has reviewed the attendance records of individuals with excessive absenteeism and has taken appropriate action. A comprehensive employment tracking/reporting tool was developed in 2001 and reports on absenteeism are now being compiled on a quarterly basis. The Ministry reported that the average number of sick days per correctional officer decreased from 16 days in 1998 to 14 days in 2001.

Staffing—Overtime

Recommendation

To improve staff attendance and reduce costs, the Ministry should ensure that:

- *actual overtime worked is properly recorded in the attendance management system;*
- *overtime is better tracked and monitored; and*
- *staff with regular hours available are used before overtime hours are assigned.*

Current Status

During 2000 and 2001, the Ministry implemented the Shift Scheduling Administration System (SSAS) to create and maintain rotating shift schedules at correctional institutions. The scheduling system has now been installed in 24 institutions, 10 of which have been using the system since February 2002. The system provides a number of tools to enable management at correctional institutions to schedule staff in a manner that more effectively manages the allotment of overtime hours.

The Ministry has not conducted a formal evaluation of the success of the SSAS in managing overtime. According to the Ministry, it has begun developing a method for evaluating the SSAS.

COMPLIANCE WITH LEGISLATIVE AND MINISTRY REQUIREMENTS

Staff Training

Recommendation

To establish training programs that help to better protect staff and inmates, the Ministry should:

- *provide up-to-date training to all correctional staff; and*
- *maintain current staff training records.*

Current Status

In 2000/01, the Ministry indicated that it had allocated \$5 million in new funding for staff training. The Ministry informed us that training for correctional officers and managers is continually being developed and delivered. A number of mandatory training hours for correctional officers are also being provided. In addition, the Ministry advised us that on an ongoing basis new programs are developed to meet the changing needs of correctional officers (courses include, for example, Suicide Awareness and Prevention, Mentally-Ill Offenders, Effective Correctional Communications, and Stress Management and the Correctional Officer).

The Ministry indicated that it has implemented a system that tracks information regarding staff training. This information is updated weekly.

Correctional Programs

Recommendation

To better meet its mandate of protecting society and motivating offenders towards positive personal change, the Ministry should ensure that:

- *the correctional needs of offenders are properly assessed and addressed through the provision of appropriate programs; and*
- *the effectiveness of correctional programs is evaluated in a timely manner.*

Current Status

The Ministry informed us that it is ensuring the correctional needs of offenders are properly assessed and addressed through the provision of appropriate programs. In adult correctional institutions, a comprehensive assessment process is used to identify core offender needs.

Core programs based on empirical research are designed to address such needs to reduce recidivism. Core programs dealing with anger management, anti-criminal thinking, and substance abuse have been developed in order to meet the needs of offenders.

Since our 2000 audit, the Ministry has established a Program Effectiveness Unit to evaluate all core treatment programs and other programs for offenders. The Unit measures both process and outcome and provides continuous feedback to operators and senior decision-makers on the effectiveness of these programs.

Protection and Security Requirements—Critical Incidents

Recommendation

To reduce or prevent critical incidents, the Ministry should more closely monitor the compliance with security measures by its correctional institutions and ensure timely, corrective action in cases of non-compliance.

Current Status

The Ministry has established various other measures to reduce or prevent critical incidents and ensure timely corrective action is taken in cases where security measures are not complied with. Such measures include the establishment of:

- critical incident stress management teams, which educate correctional staff about critical incident stress and appropriate intervention measures;
- institutional security audits;
- security committees at each correctional institution; and
- a database for tracking how the recommendations of a Coroner's jury are responded to in order to identify trends and take corrective action to prevent further incidents.

In addition, the *Corrections Accountability Act, 2000* provides for the establishment of a local Board of Monitors at Ontario correctional facilities. These boards are to strengthen links between the institutions and the local community while ensuring the delivery of adequate services. The board members are to act as independent observers, offering an objective review of the programs for and care and supervision of offenders.

Inmates With Mental Disorders

Recommendation

To better meet the needs of mentally disordered offenders, the Ministry should expedite its efforts to establish treatment facilities and diversion measures for such offenders.

Current Status

The Ministry is in the process of implementing initiatives to restructure correctional institutions that provide specialized services for mentally disordered offenders. The Ministry entered into a partnership with the Royal Ottawa Hospital to operate a new treatment centre in Brockville. According to the Ministry, this two-part project, which is scheduled to be completed in 2004, involves both new construction and renovation of existing buildings and represents a consolidation of existing beds. As well, the Ministry has committed to establishing a 50-bed treatment unit at the new institution in North Bay. However, the contract remains to be tendered.

In spring 2000, the Ministry entered into a partnership with the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health at the Maplehurst Correctional Complex for the shared provision of services to mentally ill female offenders. Ministry staff and external consultants have started developing a document that will outline the programs and services to be offered to female offenders.

The Ministry indicated that it has been working with other justice ministries in developing projects for diverting mentally disordered offenders who are inappropriately incarcerated at correctional institutions to more appropriate facilities.

In addition, the Ministry has entered into partnerships with community agencies in Toronto to provide case management services. Such partnerships involve case managers working with the institution and probation and parole offices to provide assessment, discharge planning, and follow-up of mentally disordered offenders. As well, psychiatric nurses are assigned to work in conjunction with a Ministry of Health community case planner to deliver comprehensive discharge planning services to high-need offenders at one of its jails.

MEASURING AND REPORTING ON EFFECTIVENESS

Recommendation

The Ministry should develop and implement performance measures to assess the effectiveness of Institutional Services in motivating offenders towards positive personal change.

Current Status

In July 2002, the Ministry implemented a new performance framework for all adult correctional institutions, which outlines various outcomes, long-term goals, and key performance indicators. The performance framework is to be used to assess compliance with ministry standards and the extent to which correctional services, including Institutional Services, are achieving their performance objectives.

According to the Ministry, a performance framework for the young offender and community business/operational streams is currently under development, for implementation in 2002/03.

As well, the Ministry has established re-offending baseline rates. For the first time, the province has chosen to use the rate of recidivism (re-offending) to measure performance and report to the public. Using a re-offending tracking system, the province will measure the effectiveness of correctional policies and programs as it relates to the rehabilitation of offenders. Re-offending has been defined as a return to provincial correctional supervision on a subsequent conviction.