

Multi-Agency Partnership (MAP)

Thursday, March 22, 2018

Location: ISSofBC Welcome House

The meeting was held on the unceded territories of the Coast Salish peoples including the Tsleil-Waututh, Squamish and Musqueam nations.

Attendees: Saleem Spindari (MOSAIC); Darae Lee (MOSAIC); Andrew Kuipers (Kinbrace); Fran Gallo (Kinbrace); Loren Balisky (Kinbrace); Raul Gatica (Kinbrace); Angelica Alejandro (VAST); Mariana M. Vieyra (VAST); Frank Cohn (VAST); Leona Lu (VAST); Sabrina Dumitra (AMSSA); Peter Prediger (inasmuch); Tammy Johnson (inasmuch); Louise Ghoussaeb (bc211); Nathan Wright (bc211); James Grunau (Journey Home); Susana Martinez (MSDPR); Salima Jamal (MSDPR); Iris Solorzano (Options); Dennis Juarez (Options); Marcela Fuller (PIRS); Bridget Bell (IRB); Mona Hassania (SOS-ISS); Bonnie Wong (SOS); Mario Ayala (WCMC); Yola Vargas (FBC); Katherine de Visser (IRCC); Mark Konrad (IRCC); Ron Lisowsky (CBSA); Kirk Salonen (CBSA); Agasel Lindawan; Maria Alpirez (Collingwood N. H.); Mia Morin (Vancity); Maria Corvino (Kiwassa N.H.); Sonja Sladojevic (MPFCS); Patricia Mahecha (Inland Refugee Society); Cecilia Tagle (VSB-SWIS); Jerry Wu (VSB-SWIS); Tassillie Dent (City Uni of Seattle); Conference Call: Jenny Moss (MAP)

Apologies: Sylvie Viger and staff at MJTT, Ronnie Law (MOSAIC)

9:30 am Welcome

Co-chair: Saleem Spindari, MOSAIC

Introductions

The Agenda was outlined and approved.

The February Minutes were approved

Information sheets about the nominees for MAP Co-Chair were handed out

9:45 am Update on the National Immigration Detention Framework

Presentation by: Kirk Salonen - Supervisor of the Triage Unit at CBSA

Ron Lisowsky - Detainee Liaison Officer at CBSA

This presentation is about the new Immigrant Holding Facility in BC, one of the pillars to the new policy on detention framework which includes alternatives to detention.

The facility will be located in the old RCMP building in Surrey (at 76 Ave). It will be housed in the first and second floors, and the third will be left empty.

The building has been gutted and work has started to mark out the new facility which has been architect-designed. Expected to open in January 2019.

Benefits based on lessons learned:

The design of the building is based on past recommendations and a switch in focus to the care and well-being of those detained. The current facility at Vancouver Airport was criticised because there was no access for inmates to fresh air and exercise, and there was no natural light.

The facility is also a dedicated area for immigration detainees – there will not be any regular prisoners present. The co-mingling with convicted criminals presently will be avoided.

- The new facility provides: outside exercise area, children's playground, medical and mental health professional care, a kitchen for the use of detainees – it's more a place of safety than a detention facility.
Capacity: 70 + extra cots if there was to be an unexpected surge in arrivals.
- Hearing room at the facility – no need to move detainees downtown for their hearings. And this room is also to be used for easier access for NGO's, family and friends visiting.

The facility is designed to be non-correctional – it still has to be secure but now much more comfortable. People are held because of fear of flight or lack of identity – factors that make them untrustworthy; but not because of any judgement on their lives. Previously it was alleged that detainees were placed in handcuffs and treated like criminals – CBSA hopes these complaints will diminish and stress for the detainees reduce when the conditions they live in are improved.

- There will no longer be lock down in rooms
- TV available in each room
- There will be a Family Unit – men and women will still sleep separately but they can be together with their children during the day in a common area that also has a school and a play area.

Question: is this a real school?

There will be a certified teacher or day-care person but there won't be a relationship with the school board or a regular curriculum.

- Detention liaison will be present 24/7 – this provides access to help and services.

Question: regarding the background of staff working with detainees.

The new transport and care contract has been awarded to Securigard (formerly was with Garda Security) – they will provide the transport of detainees to and from the facility and supervise the detainees there. They won't be trained as correctional officers and will be monitored by detainee liaison officers. They provide useful feedback to the DLO's – e.g. on the state of mind of detainees, that can help in providing the right care.

There will be new detention facilities also in Laval, Quebec and in the Toronto area. Together with Vancouver they will provide equivalent care and treat detainees the same. There is still a need to talk about facilities in other provinces – the aim is to provide consistency in care throughout Canada.

The airport facility will close in 2021.

Question: where and to whom are detainees released? (regarding emergency housing)

They are usually released to family or friends, but if they don't have anyone close, or if they are moving on to another destination, they are released alone. CBSA works with non-profit

agencies to help find housing for released persons. Shelter housing is an enormous issue – CBSA grateful for the updated shelter information provided by BC211 – especially when it is updated daily.

POLICY AND PROCEDURES

1. Long term detention Review: the use of long term detention is being reviewed. Anyone held for a longer period of time will be monitored closely and the reason for holding them will be reviewed continually. Reporting on all long term detentions must now be made at a national level as well as at every hearing the detainee attends.
2. New position – Community Liaison Officer: Working with the John Howard Society and the Salvation Army – Belkin House where some long term detainees may be accommodated under a contract with CBSA. These environments provide the necessary security but are also more relaxed and have more mental health support.
3. Minors: Policy demands that the detention of minors is questioned and considerably reduced. Children will be very closely monitored.
4. Initial questionnaire: The initial assessment by CBSA guides how detainees are placed based on any previous criminal behaviour. Known criminals cannot be kept at large with regular detainees. Likewise answers to the questionnaire may allow officers to select an Alternate to Detention (ATD). The CBSA officer gathers the information and a decision is made by the manager in discussion with the officer based on this information.
e.g. the arrest of a family may indicate release into the community, rather than detention, in order to keep the family together which is a main goal.

The questionnaire also covers medical and mental health needs, medication etc. to further inform decisions made about the care of the individual.

5. The overall goals of the new detention framework are CONSISTENCY and MONITORING
The Lower Mainland Canadian Red Cross Detention Monitoring team will have access to the new centre, all federal and provincial holding centres; to report on individual's conditions of detention like food, lighting, exercise, access to medical care and legal counsel as well as visitation rights.
6. THE ALTERNATIVES TO DETENTION
 - a) **Terms and Conditions**: individual is free to leave but certain conditions are placed on his/her movements e.g. can't leave Canada, or restricted to a certain area, report frequently.
 - b) **Voice reporting** is now common as it is less disruptive. Currently being tested in Toronto and due to start in Vancouver in the summer.
 - c) **Community Liaison Officer**: will monitor those at Belkin House or John Howard Society where they have established very good communication.
Example: individual who is alcoholic – they can receive appropriate support and

programs at these institutions and remain outside detention.

BUT – this support is only for while they are under review.

d) **Leg monitors** – used in Toronto but there has been no decision to extend the program to Vancouver. Useful for medium to high risk individuals.

Downside is that they can be cut off and the program is very expensive to maintain.

MEDICAL & MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

There will be a clinic at the detention centre though the contract to run it has not been awarded yet. Staffing will consist of a doctor, psychologist and a nurse, and there will be a medication facility. More funding has been made available to provide this resource. Everyone will see the doctor and the psychologist on arrival.

Securigard training now includes much more on how to identify a mental health issue and get help sooner. There is also training re: suicide awareness. Guards are to look out for any indicators. CBSA has come a long way in its understanding of mental health issues and their importance. Supervision that is caring and informed is now the norm rather than punitive. At the 30 day review hearings any mental health issues are presented to assist in making the decision to continue detention or not.

CBSA also has access to detainees held at correctional institutions in BC to check on mental health and also to prison records.

QUESTIONS FOR CBSA

1. How is the new detention facility designed for refugee claimants and their needs in comparison to long-term detainees?

A: For short term stays like claimants there is a 9 bed facility downstairs – though this will usually be used for removals.

Areas of the detention centre:

There are 2 sides: male and female – both have 2 levels (Level 1 and 2) depending on risk assessment:

Low risk section would include refugee claimants

High risk would be for long term detentions (ID unknown) and known criminals.

There is no intermingling of the 2 levels although detainees can be moved from Level 1 to 2 if their behaviour warrants it.

There is a family unit where men and women and their children can be together during daytime hours.

2. What is the accommodation like for LGBTQ individuals?

A: There is a 'flexi unit' available for vulnerable individuals which is gender neutral.

3. Can NGO's and lawyers visit claimants at the detention facility?

A NGO's will have a room to visit detainees

Note: At Burnaby centre there was a cultural worker to assist detainees/staff, especially with the initial appraisal. The presence of an NGO encourages more trust on behalf of the detainee. There will be facilities for visiting legal services, including videoconferencing.

4. What are the rules regarding visiting?

There will be specific visiting hours for family, friends, NGO's and lawyers.

Depending on the detainee the visits will be either open or closed. But open visits will be very relaxed and open.

All visitors must show ID and will be screened: searched for weapons.

5. Could the CBSA Liaison Officers regularly attend MAP meetings?

A: CBSA will consider this request. But cannot help with ID'ing particular cases, because of privacy issues. Agreed that more communication is needed regarding claimants in detention.

6. COMMENT: CBSA must see claimants as survivors of trauma – that a mental health approach is paramount in the care of claimants.

Evidence suggests that 50% claimants are survivors of trauma. It's vital to be aware of this vulnerability and make an early assessment.

CBSA added: the new and important approach at CBSA is to place 'care and well-being' of detainees above everything. They want to send a message that detainees are safe and that staff are there to be helpful.

CBSA was thanked for their open presentation.

BREAK

11 AM: ELECTION OF CO-CHAIR POSITION AT MAP

There are three nominations:

- Sabrina Dumitra – AMSSA
- Iris Solorzano – Options
- Mariana Martinez Vieyra – VAST

The elected co-chair will serve until June 2020.

Each agency, whether officially a member or not, had one vote and circled the name of the nominee they wanted on the information sheets provided.

Tie announced: Sabrina and Mariana

Voting took place again: 2nd tie

Finally, in a tie-breaker, MARIANA MARTINEZ VIEYRA – VAST, was declared new Co-chair.

Saleem thanked all the nominees for standing – noting that the next meeting will be held at Options. It's a benefit when MAP members can visit other facilities and learn about their services first-hand. Any other agency who would like to host MAP meetings is encouraged to step forward.

11:20 Compiling Questions ready for next month's presentation by Monica Uribe (Min Health)

Next month's speaker has agreed to answer MAP members' questions regarding refugee claimants and medical service regulations and provisions.

PLEASE EMAIL YOUR QUESTIONS TO JENNY TO COMPILE AND FORWARD PRIOR TO THE NEXT MEETING

EMAIL: info@mapbc.org

At the meeting the following questions were compiled:

- a) MSP and IFH – what is provided under each system to refugee claimants?
- b) Who can be accepted under IFH?
- c) How can we find out which clinics serve claimants? (Kirk Salonen, CBSA mentioned the following website: <https://ifhp-pfsi.medavie.bluecross.ca/en/search-ifhp-providers/>)
- d) Who is being accepted by IFH?
- e) Why is so much paperwork needed to have a claimant included?
- f) How is a claimant's MSP affected when they get a job?
- g) What is a claimant's eligibility to healthcare during the transition from income assistance for the unemployed to working?
- h) Claimants on Income Assistance receive bills for MSP when they seek treatment before making a claim – is there any way the Ministry could relieve claimants of this burden?
- i) What kind of specialized services are available to claimants?
- j) A claimant had an injury before making a refugee claim and the hospital made her pay for their services. Is this correct?
- k) Before their eligibility interview and before obtaining IFH coverage, how do refugee claimants have their health services covered?
- l) Similarly: need help with costs during the first 48 hours of arrival
- m) What is available to US-born children of refugee claimants to Canada – they appear to not be eligible for MSP or IFH? Being US citizens lead to the refusal of their refugee claims. When parents are accepted as refugee claimants and/or refugees with MSP coverage, what is available for those children who don't have any status in Canada?
- n) Doctors that are taking new patients (very few) don't want to take on IFH patients as IFH isn't apparently paying them in a timely manner (the Dr we spoke to was still waiting for payment from December). Is this something Monica could look into?

11:30 am – AGENCY UPDATES

- **Dennis (Options)**

Resource Fair on March 10 well attended by claimants and agencies

- **Loren (Kinbrace)**

Andrew Kuipers' last day Friday 23 – he will be missed.

Kinbrace is not hiring to replace him right now.

Renovations ongoing at Kinbrace (affects capacity)

- **Mario (Welcome Centre)**

ISSofBC Welcome Centre will open the new clinic in Surrey in May partnering with Options

A new clinic & pharmacy will be opened in Burnaby – would like to partner here too.

- **Kirk (CBSA)**
Thanked MAP for the opportunity to present a balanced perspective between law enforcement and the issues NGO's care deeply about. Special thanks to VAST for their assistance.
- **Susana (MSDPR)**
Observation that with the new approach to caring for detainees the name of the new facility doesn't do it justice.
- **Salima (MSDP)**
Leaving her position at the ministry. A replacement will be found for MAP.
- **Patricia (Inland Refugee Society)**
IRS has resumed services to refugee claimants. A flyer of available services distributed at the meeting. (A revised copy of the flyer was attached to an email sent to MAP list.)
604-356-4360
- **Iris (Options)**
MAP welcome for the meeting in April – see exact address at foot of Minutes.
- **Nathan (BC211)**
They are conducting extensive investigations into shelter lists for which they have received funding to investigate and improve functionality of this aspect of their information service.
- **Bridget (IRB)**
Statistics: 147 arrivals into Vancouver (89 principal claimants)
Top countries in order: Iran, Afghanistan, India, Turkey, Iraq, Mexico
Trends: as normal numbers dipped in the winter but started to rise in February and are expected to continue.
90 – 95% of claims will be postponed and 12 – 15 months for a hearing will be normal.
QUESTION: *what is the lead time up to a hearing?*
A: 60 – 90 days lead time is provided for normal hearings.
QUESTION: *are there any expedited hearings?*
Yes there are expedited hearings and IRB maintains a list – especially for children. The hearing can be in only 2/3 weeks' time.
For expedited hearings sometimes there can be very little lead time and the IRB is looking for feedback on how the expedited system is working in terms of the impact on those concerned. The idea is to keep the schedule always full.
At the moment IRB is scheduling for July hearings.
- **Sabrina (AMSSA)**
National Settlement Council meeting coming up in mid-June in Ottawa with representatives from all over Canada to discuss the consultation process for the settlement sector in 2019. Sabrina would like time at the next meeting to hear from MAP membership.

- **Fran (READY TOURS)**

Next READY Tour is April 6 but the session is full. Printed RHP Guides are available. An update to the current RHP Guide will be available sometime in April.

- **Mark (IRCC)**

MAP had inquired about the IRCC's involvement in the 'Innovation Hub'

It's designed to be a flexible, rapid response to refugee claims. For example it has been working in Montreal in response to massive caseload of claims there. Same response being developed for Toronto and Winnipeg.

Things it can do include extremely rapid data entry, working across the country it can take advantage of time differences to gain results faster.

The IIU is already working with CBSA to handle claimants apprehended by CBSA so their claims can be transferred to CIC immediately. (CBSA starts the process – hands the claimant a letter of referral to CIC to complete the initial claim)

At the moment they are trying new techniques to see what works.

- **Mona (SOS)**

The English version of the multilingual video series on claimant orientation will be ready next week. There are 6 videos describing the procedure for claimants. The videos will be accessible online. SOS has asked IRCC for more assistance to refugees during the extended wait times.

- **Frank (VAST)**

April 12 – Open House focusing on information for funders and partners – at Welcome House
Open invitation to all MAP members.

- **Darae (MOSAIC)**

Expanding their services to LGBTQ claimants in Surrey with one new staff member:

- Peer-centered group service
- Clinical services will follow

- **James (Journey Home)**

Journey Home has received an offer for a community garden – located near King Edward.
Agencies interested in participating please contact.

- **Mariana (VAST)**

Grateful to be chosen as MAP co-chair

Attended 'Welcoming the Rainbow' conference hosted by IRCC – there was lots of openness to talk about LGBTQ needs.

- **Recommendation:** Canada Reads nominated book: **The Boat People** by Sharon Bala. Documents the arrival of Tamils on BC shores.

- **Andrew (Kinbrace/MAP Co-chair)**

Thanked everyone at MAP for the opportunity to co-chair.

12:00 pm Evaluation and Adjournment

Next Meeting: Thursday, April 26, 9:30 am at Options Surrey.

Address: Newcomer Employment Support Program (Whalley WorkBC Location Meeting Room)
Suite 160-10362 King George Blvd.
Surrey, BC

Nearest Skytrain Station: Surrey Central