

Engagement on Proposed Changes to Reviews of Deaths in Correctional Institutions Family Information Sheet

Background

The Office of the Chief Coroner (OCC) is holding public engagement sessions to discuss a potential legislative amendment to the *Coroners Act*. This change would introduce mandatory coroner-led annual reviews of all non-natural deaths that occur in a correctional institution in Ontario, replacing the mandatory requirement for an inquest into these deaths. Inquests would still be available, and the Chief Coroner would still be able to call an inquest into a death that occurred while in custody.

While the inquest process has many positive aspects, the legal process causes significant delays between the time of death and the inquest and there is very limited ability to consider the circumstances of individual deaths in the context of other deaths, thereby missing critical public safety risks. The goal is to find a method of death review that allows timelier, thorough, objective reviews of individual deaths that also permits the identification of system-wide issues by those who understand the system through lived experience and/or expertise. Feedback is being gathered to understand whether an alternative approach can meet this goal.

To determine the best way forward, the OCC is seeking input from representative experts, individuals, and communities who may be impacted by this change. No decisions have been made at this time, and the proposal is currently in the policy development and engagement stage. The OCC is seeking this information to inform how the proposed model could work in practice. If an annual review process is adopted, further engagement will occur.

Participation

The OCC is inviting families who may be impacted by this proposal to provide input on the proposed change. We welcome feedback in any format that is most convenient to you. Written submissions may be sent via email to Kim.Motyl@ontario.ca and Stephen.Moore2@ontario.ca, or by mail to:

Attn: Kim Motyl & Stephen Moore
Office of the Chief Coroner
25 Morton Shulman Avenue
Toronto, ON M3M 0B1

Additionally, if you would like to attend a future virtual Town Hall discussion with the Chief Coroner for Ontario, please send an email to Kim.Motyl@ontario.ca and Stephen.Moore2@ontario.ca expressing your desire to attend and include your name and email address. Individuals who have expressed an interest in attending will receive a Zoom link in advance of the session once a date and time have been scheduled.

We recognize that participation in this process may be very challenging for many reasons. Please know that engagement is entirely voluntary and there is no obligation to participate. We value your perspectives and would be grateful for any comments, questions, or concerns that you may wish to share.

Contact Information

If you have any questions about the proposal or how to provide feedback, please contact Kim Motyl, Chief Counsel, Office of the Chief Coroner (Kim.Motyl@ontario.ca) and Stephen Moore, Manager, Inquests, Office of the Chief Coroner (Stephen.Moore2@ontario.ca).

Thank you for considering this invitation to participate. Please know that this is just the first step of this process. If an amendment is made, there will be further engagement and discussions about the review process and procedure.