



Citizens' Representative Message

Since the September edition of "Insights" was released, we have been continuing our work at a fast pace. Our staff remain 100% on site with adherence to public health directives, and we have all collaborated on the release of the Citizens' Representative's Digest (our annual report) scheduled for later this month. At the end of September, I was fortunate to be able to leave for my first official meetings outside the capital since I was appointed in May, 2019. These included a visit to the Newfoundland and Labrador Correctional Center for Women in Clarenville, and the Bishops Falls Correctional Center, where I was able to do a town hall style meeting with inmates and meet with the institutional head.



**Saqamaw Mi'sel Joe of the
Miawpukek First Nation and
Bradley Moss**

From Bishop's Falls I headed down the Baie d'Espoir highway to visit the beautiful community of Conne River and spent the better part of a morning with Saqamaw Mi'sel Joe of the Miawpukek First Nation to discuss matters of mutual interest, our respective roles, and how my Office may be of assistance to his members.

From Conne River, I journeyed to Corner Brook and was honoured to meet with Chief Brendan Mitchell of the Qalipu First Nation for a morning as well. These were both great conversations and I want to thank both of the Chiefs for taking time out of their busy schedules to meet with me, and for giving me a lot of good advice. While the First Nations in our Province have very effective lines of communication into the provincial government, I believe our Office can be of some assistance, and this starts with a mutual understanding of what needs exist, and what the Ombudsman can do to help. Interestingly, my colleague in the Northwest Territories, Colette Langlois, tells me that in Indigenous languages in her Territory there is no direct translation for the word "Ombudsman", but inquiries to nine different Indigenous groups returned phrases like "worker helper"; "someone that stands for fairness in the workplace"; "a person who helps a person who



**Chief Brendan Mitchell of the Qalipu
First Nation and Bradley Moss**

complains"; someone who looks out for people"; and "a person who investigates for honesty." It is my intention to meet with all Band Chiefs in our Province during my term.

Bradley J. Moss

International Ombudsman Day

On October 8, 2020, our Office acknowledged *International Ombuds Day*. In our ombudsman role, the OCR provides the valuable service of responding to individual and systemic concerns raised by citizens in their experience of dealing with provincial government departments and agencies. Our independent oversight seeks to either resolve issues that are matters of administration, or to provide an explanation indicating reasons why the matter does not breach the test of administrative fairness. The ombuds concept strives to resolve matters in a manner that is efficient; hears the voices of both parties of the matter respectfully and impartially; and is less intrusive than other methods of resolution. While the OCR has been in place for nearly 20 years, the ombuds concept has been well established in Canadian provinces for more than 50 years. Our colleagues with Ombudsman Ontario produced a video message from some of our Canadian Parliamentary Ombudsman to acknowledge the important and worthwhile work of ombudsman and the pride and passion in which we carry out this work.

We welcome your visit to our Facebook page to view this message, which includes greetings from the Citizens' Representative, Bradley Moss. Our Facebook page can be viewed here: <https://www.facebook.com/Office-of-the-Citizens-Representative-Newfoundland-and-Labrador-171628062894528>



Seeking Fairness

A citizen contacted the OCR advising that a request for reassessment for Home Supports under the Community Support Program of Eastern Health was denied. The citizen had been assessed for supports several weeks prior and was determined to be ineligible for home supports at that time. The citizen, however, identified both a deterioration in health and some life changes since the first assessment, and felt the denial of a reassessment was unfair due to the level of deterioration experienced. The citizen understood that the OCR could not question the clinical assessment previously completed, which resulted in ineligibility. Our Office was able, however, to work with Eastern Health and a reassessment for eligibility was scheduled with the citizen.



Finding Solutions

An inmate from Her Majesty's Penitentiary (HMP) contacted the OCR stating that despite requests over several weeks to speak with a Classification Officer to discuss ongoing concerns, he had not received any indication that his requests were received or that a meeting was being secured for him. The inmate alleged the lack of responsiveness was unfair as there were several concerning issues that required attention and support of the Classification Officer. Upon inquiry to administration at HMP, the OCR was informed of policy that requires a Classification Officer must meet with an inmate at least every 30 days. A review of the inmate's file confirmed it had been more than 30 days since the inmate had access to a Classification Officer. The OCR was assured the inmate would meet with a Classification Officer on the same day. Administration further indicated that this policy requirement would be addressed with appropriate staff members to ensure compliance.



Happy Holidays



OCR staff

Questions? Comments?

Is your department, agency or community group interested in learning more about the OCR, its services and processes? Do you have a suggestion or question to be addressed in a future edition of *Insights*? Call us at 1-800-559-0079 or (709) 729-7647, or e-mail citrep@gov.nl.ca.

**Office of the Citizens' Representative
Province of Newfoundland and Labrador**

4th Floor, Beothuck Building
20 Crosbie Place
P.O. Box 8400
St. John's, NL



www.citizensrep.nl.ca

Tel: 709-729-7647
Toll Free: 1-800-559-0079
Fax: 709-729-7696



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