

Inquest into inmate Glen Edward Wareham's death begins Monday
Correctional Investigator of Canada said long delays lead to frustration for families of the deceased

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Glen Edward Wareham, 28, was from New Waterford, N.S. he died at the Shepody Bay Healing Centre on April 29, 2010. (McLellan Bros. Funeral Home/InMemorium.ca)



Tori Weldon
Reporter

Tori Weldon is a reporter based in Moncton. She's been working for the CBC since 2008.

Canada's prison watchdog will be closely following the coroner's inquest into the case of Glen Edward Wareham, who died inside a Correctional Service of Canada facility for prisoners with mental health issues.

Wareham, 28, of New Waterford, N.S., died at the Shepody Bay Healing Centre on April 29, 2010. The coroner's inquest into his death is set to begin Monday.

"Whenever there is an unexpected or unnatural death in custody, particularly one that happens under suspicious circumstances, it's important to try to learn from that death so that others could be prevented," said Howard Sapers, the correctional investigator of Canada.

He said every death of an inmate is subject to some form of investigation.

"We'll probably see between 60 and 70 deaths in federal penitentiaries this year, some of those deaths will result from natural causes, many won't and it's important to try to understand how it is that people's lives are put to risk while they are inside a jail or prison," he said.

Chief coroner Gregory Forestell will preside over the inquest and a jury will hear testimony from subpoenaed witnesses to determine the facts around Wareham's death.

The jury will be given the opportunity to make recommendations aimed at preventing deaths under similar circumstances in the future.

Long waits



Howard Sapers, the correctional investigator of Canada, said he will be watching the coroner's inquest into the death of Wareham very closely. (Roy Grogan)

Wareham's death was reviewed by Sapers's office.

He said he couldn't go into specific details about the findings of his report, but he is looking forward to getting the results of the coroner's inquest, which is expected to take two weeks.

"In this case, this death raises some very, very challenging issues and so an inquest is certainly in order and will hopefully result in some recommendations that the Correctional Service of Canada could implement to prevent other deaths," he said.

Wareham died over six years ago, but Sapers said lengthy waits for answers is unfortunately not uncommon.

"It is very frustrating, particularly to the families," said Sapers.

"Keep in mind offenders have families and their families are very concerned about these circumstances under which their loved ones died and so these are very very long delays that we typically experience."

Recommendations

When it comes to the effectiveness of coroner's inquest, Sapers points to the facts surrounding Ashley Smith's death inside the Grand Valley Institution in Kitchener, Ont. in 2007.

"Ashley died inside a segregation cell, when we examined prison suicide what we found is that nearly half of them over a three-year period that we were studying took place inside a segregation cell."

Smith, 19, was originally from Moncton, N.B. She died from self-inflicted choking, while guards watched.

"It's very frustrating because that usually results in similar recommendations and we see recommendations made over and over and over again," said Sapers.