

## N.S. family pushing for changes to mental health services in prisons



A Nova Scotia mother is hoping her son's story will bring changes to how inmates with mental health issues are dealt with in prison.

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A Nova Scotia mother is hoping her son's story will bring about changes to the way inmates with mental health issues are dealt with in the prison system.

Over the next two weeks, a jury in Moncton will hear testimony from those who knew 28-year-old Glen Edward Wareham best. He was an inmate of the Shepody Healing Centre in Dorchester, N.B., a facility that serves prisoners with mental health issues.

He died in hospital in 2010.

**PHOTOS**



Glen Edward Wareham was an inmate of the Shepody Healing Centre in Dorchester, N.B. He died in hospital in 2010. (McLellan Bros. Funeral Home)

“I have a lot of regrets, because I didn't get him home,” said Heather Locke, Wareham’s mother. “Maybe I didn't fight enough. I tried, I really did. And he didn't get the help he needed.”

The goal of the inquest is to give a jury the chance to come up with recommendations to prevent deaths like Wareham's in the future.

The New Brunswick Coroner Service is an independent agency and can't find any legal responsibility for Wareham's death in this inquiry. What the jury is trying to do is find ways to avoid a similar situation with another inmate in the future.

When asked, Heather Locke told the jury she doesn't believe people with severe mental health issues should be imprisoned at all.

“I know they have to pay their dues to society for breaking the law, however, I still believe they don't belong in prisons. They belong in a psychiatric facility that's not for inmates, it's to specialize in the treatment that they need, not a restraint,” said Locke.

The jury also heard from Wareham's prison psychologist, who spoke about his history of sexual abuse, drug addiction, and self-harm.

The chief coroner noted 172 recorded incidents of self-harm over the six and a half years Wareham was incarcerated.

Things got off to a rocky start when the chief coroner denied Locke legal standing, which would have allowed her to call and question her own witnesses. Instead, she is only able to testify.

Under the Provincial Coroner's Act, coroners in New Brunswick can't grant legal standing to parties with a direct interest in the proceedings, including families of the deceased.

“It's of note especially here in Moncton that the family of Ashley Smith participated in her inquest that happened in Ontario, and the effect of their participation was enormous,” said lawyer Meaghan Daniel.

Moncton native Ashley Smith died from self-strangulation in an Ontario cell in 2007. Daniel says her family's participation was crucial in having Smith's death ruled homicide, rather than an accident.

The jury will reconvene Tuesday morning.  
*With files from CTV Atlantic's Cami Kepke.*