



# North Shore Schizophrenia Society

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**October 20, 2011**

## **Public Event: Correctional Investigator Howard Sapers Speaks on the Mentally Ill in Our Prisons**

If Canadian penitentiaries are fast becoming the largest psychiatric facilities in the country, where do we go from here?

Correctional Investigator Howard Sapers, Canada's independent ombudsman for federal offenders, will speak on Monday, November 7, 2011, at 7 p.m., at the West Vancouver Memorial Library. Sapers will discuss how Canada is failing people with mental illness: failing to provide the treatment and services that would keep people with serious mental illnesses out of the criminal justice system in the first place, and failing to provide treatment and humane conditions to severely mentally ill inmates. The event is part of the North Shore Schizophrenia Society's ongoing lecture series on serious mental illness and related topics.

"Many mentally disordered offenders are simply being warehoused in federal penitentiaries," Sapers says. Eleven per cent of offenders entering the prison system have a diagnosable mental illness and 14.5% have been hospitalized for psychiatric issues in the past.

The Office of the Correctional Investigator is responsible for investigating and bringing resolution to individual offender complaints, as well as making recommendations on policies and procedures in the correctional system that if implemented would make correctional practice more humane and effective.

### About Howard Sapers

Sapers was reappointed as Correctional Investigator of Canada, in 2009, for a five-year term. Previously, he was vice-chairperson for the Prairie Region of the National Parole Board of Canada and director of the Crime Prevention Investment Fund at the National Crime Prevention Centre. He served as MLA in the Alberta Legislative Assembly from 1993 – 2001, where he held various roles as health critic, treasury critic, house leader, and leader of the Official Opposition. He has taught courses in Criminology, Correctional Law and Communications in the Correctional Services Program at Grant MacEwan University in Edmonton and authored several publications regarding the role of the ombudsman, human rights and corrections, and crime prevention.

### About the North Shore Schizophrenia Society

The North Shore Schizophrenia Society (NSSS), founded in 1983, works to alleviate the suffering caused by schizophrenia and other serious mental illnesses. It is a family-support organization, providing help for those with mentally ill relatives, offering one-on-one support, group support, information, education, public awareness programs, and advocacy. It serves the North Shore, Bowen Island, and the Sea to Sky Corridor. More information on NSSS can be found at [www.northshoreschizophrenia.org](http://www.northshoreschizophrenia.org).

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