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The final day of testimony into the 2015 sudden death of Mark Jeffrey, an Inuk man formerly incarcerated at Beaver Creek, focused less on Jeffrey himself, and more on the procedures and policies that impacted his life while in the custody of the Correctional Service of Canada.

The final witnesses the inquest heard testimony from included Sarah Macdonald, assistant warden of interventions at Beaver Creek Institution and Marty Maltby, senior policy analyst, Aboriginal initiatives at Correctional Service of Canada (CSC).

The correctional system's use of segregation, or solitary confinement as it is sometimes known, an integral part of the inquest, came up early on in Tuesday's proceedings.

Beaver Creek Institution stopped placing of

fenders in segregation in March 2019, Macdonald testified. The practice was banned in Canada in Nov. 2019. The correctional system now uses what is known as the "structured intervention unit."

Offenders who engage in misconduct like fights or any other behaviour perceived to be a threat to the safety of the prison, the staff or the other men, are removed from the general population, Macdonald said.

"In recognition that segregation is no longer an option, there certainly has been a change in culture as well," she said. "Offenders that previously would have been removed, we are finding other ways to manage them in the population, depending on the situation."

Offenders are held in the gymnasium or an office until matters can be resolved; in the event they cannot, an inmate is transferred to another Ontario prison the same day.

Decisions about what happens to offenders are "made with as many voices at the table as there can be" and as urgently as possible, she said. "No more than a couple of hours because we cannot hold an offender in an area that is obviously not his cell for any length of



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Beaver Creek Institution, a minimum and medium federal prison in Gravenhurst, is run by the Correctional Services of Canada.

time."

Questioned about cultural awareness training for prison staff, Macdonald said it has increased over the years. Following Jeffrey's 2015 death, she said managers took Inuit awareness training.

Asked if further training on how personal bias can impact how staff interact with and assess inmates, Macdonald replied: "Yes, it would."

Intentional ignorance could lead to bias, Macdonald admitted, but not unintentional ignorance.

The inquest heard that

as of mid-November, Beaver Creek is home to approximately 20 Inuk inmates.

The number of Indigenous offenders in Canada has steadily increased since 2001 when they made up 17.5 per cent of inmates; that number has now surpassed 30 per cent. Indigenous people make up five per cent of the population.

Wearing a Moose Hide Campaign pin and pausing the proceedings before his testimony to offer a land acknowledgement, Maltby began with an overview of his role developing what he described as an ever-evolving set of policies CSC operates within, including its

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Inuit-specific one.

Maltby shared that additional funding — \$750,000 to \$1 million annually — is made available from the national level of the corrections system to address gaps in resources for Inuk men in its prisons

Changes have been made to transfer policies, decision-making, programming and reintegration policies for offenders, he explained, calling it an ongoing process. "I still think we've got some work to do. I'll be honest with you."

Inuit awareness training is not part of national training standards, Maltby said, but required for "individuals working in Inuit centres."

"As part of our response to the internal investigation around (Jeffrey's) case, we did do some training with the management team at Beaver Creek in particular," he said.

Diversity and cultural training has also taken place, he said, focused on bias and privilege. "We all

have bias to a certain extent," he said. "I think it's about understanding it and ensuring that we're recognizing it in all of the decisions that we make and ensuring that it doesn't influence us in a negative way."

And, discussions have taken place about moving the resources that make Beaver Creek an "Inuit Centre of Excellence" to a prison closer to Ottawa where the largest Inuit population outside of Nunavut resides as well as the construction of a federal prison in Nunavut, Maltby testified.

"There haven't been formal conversations around the building of a new institution," he said. "I'll be honest with you, I'd like to see us have less federal institutions. But, at the same point, I think there are opportunities to continue those negotiations to provide more support in the north."

Closing arguments from counsel began Wednesday before the jury begins deliberations.

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