



**Elizabeth Fry Society**  
of Cape Breton



Sept 19, 2017

For Immediate Release: In response to the Sept 18, 2017 Chronicle Herald article “Truro prison staff concerned about presence of transgender inmate.” Women’s Wellness Within and Elizabeth Fry Societies of Cape Breton and Mainland Nova Scotia respond: **Trans women are Women.**

Women’s Wellness Within is a non-profit organization that provides volunteer support to criminalized women and trans individuals who are pregnant or parenting young children. We advocate for access to housing, income, resources and health care. We are a collective of doulas, health care providers, lawyers, students, researchers and mentors. We have clearance to provide support at Nova Institution for Women Federal Prison, the Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility Provincial Jail, and women on bail and parole in the community.

The Elizabeth Fry Society of Cape Breton and Mainland Nova Scotia works with, and on behalf of, criminalized women and girls. We provide programs and services that address the underlying systemic and individual issues for women and girls from vulnerable populations who are in contact with the criminal justice system. Society members state that strip searches should be stopped as over 90% of women have experience violence and trauma.

Our organizations strongly object to the statements made in the Sept 18, 2017 Chronicle Herald article that quotes an unnamed guard as stating, “A female guard could be told to strip-search a male,” said a prison staffer who did not want to be identified. “Many (guards) do not want to do this and they want their rights recognized as much as the inmate’s.”

This statement exposes transphobic and discriminatory beliefs held by some Nova Institution staff. It also highlights the risks of stigma, isolation and trauma that trans women can be subjected to when imprisoned there.

Trans women are women.

Strip-searching is not a “right” to be protected.

Rather, the right to life, liberty and security of the person are fundamental to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and these rights cannot be violated when trans women experience the criminal justice system and incarceration.

WWW and E Fry offer our support to all the women imprisoned in Nova Institution.

**Contact:** Martha Paynter, Chair of WWW, 9022927082 [martha.paynter@gmail.com](mailto:martha.paynter@gmail.com)

Darlene MacEachern and Dawn Ferris, Elizabeth Fry Societies, 9022175978, 9024993855