

Judiciary Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No: HB-5567 / [Bill Status](#) / [Public Hearing Testimony](#)

AN ACT CONCERNING HEALTHCARE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF
Title: CORRECTION FACILITIES.

Vote Date: 3/24/2026

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 3/18/2026

File No.: 602

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Judiciary Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

Concerns have been raised in recent years about the quality, oversight, and accessibility of medical and mental healthcare in Connecticut corrections facilities, including reports of delayed treatment, untreated conditions, and barriers to obtaining care. The bill seeks to address these issues by strengthening oversight and accountability within the correctional healthcare system. It establishes new clinical and advocacy roles, improves medication management and health records systems, and enhances staff training to better respond to medical and mental health needs. The bill also aims to ensure continuity of care during incarceration and upon reentry into the community while addressing workforce shortages that contribute to delays in treatment.

SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE:

The substitute language further updates and refines the language in order to strengthen requirements on the Department of Correction and ensure timely medication administration and humane treatment of incarcerated individuals.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

External Affairs Division, Judicial Branch: The Judicial Branch does not take a position on the bill but raises several concerns about its implementation. It expresses concerns that the requirement for a pre-sentence investigation addendum documenting a defendant's medical and prescription history may be impractical; this could create issues if a defendant refuses to sign a sworn statement. Alternative language would allow the report preparer to attest that the defendant refused to provide the information. The Branch also recommends revising the

existing medical section of the report to include relevant conditions and medications. It notes concerns about the feasibility of completing the addendum 30 days before sentencing and whether it should only apply when incarceration is part of the sentence.

John DelBarba, Assistant Legal Counsel, Office of the Chief Public Defender: John DelBarba supports the bill because it would strengthen healthcare oversight and services for people incarcerated in Department of Correction facilities. Creating positions such as a Correction Patient Advocate and Correction Mental Healthcare Clinician within the Correction Ombuds would help improve medical and mental healthcare, ensure medication management and continuity of care, and protect patient rights. He also favors provisions that would prevent denial of care due to inability to pay copayments, as well as initiatives to recruit and retain medical staff such as student loan reimbursement for nurses. The bill would improve safeguards, oversight, and overall health outcomes for incarcerated individuals.

DeVaughn Ward, Correction Ombuds, State of Connecticut: DeVaughn Ward supports the bill because it would improve access to healthcare, transparency, and oversight within corrections facilities. The primary challenge in correctional healthcare has been implementing previously identified reforms, and the bill's success will depend on whether its requirements are consistently implemented and produce measurable improvements in care. He favors provisions creating positions such as a correctional patient advocate and correctional mental health clinician, implementing electronic sick call systems, conducting an independent nutrition audit, and expanding trauma-informed training for staff.

Daniel Karpowitz, Undersecretary of Criminal Justice Policy and Planning Division, Office of Policy and Management: Daniel Karpowitz supports the bill because improving healthcare for incarcerated individuals requires a more coordinated, accountable, and data-driven system. Individuals frequently move in and out of correctional custody, making continuity of care between corrections facilities and community providers critical to improving health outcomes. There is an ongoing need for stronger oversight, better use of health data, and improved coordination among state agencies to ensure effective care during incarceration and after release. He argues that strengthening the correctional healthcare system can improve outcomes for individuals returning to the community, while supporting broader public health and public safety goals.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Matthew Baidak: Matthew Baidak supports the bill because stronger oversight is needed to address serious medical neglect in corrections facilities. He mentions ongoing untreated health conditions affecting an incarcerated family member and states that repeated attempts to obtain help from DOC officials have gone unanswered. It is important to expand outside oversight to ensure incarcerated individuals receive necessary medical care and accountability for negligence.

Thomas Burr, Public Policy Manager, NAMI Connecticut: Thomas Burr supports the bill because it would strengthen health and mental healthcare oversight, staffing, and accountability within corrections facilities. There is a high prevalence of mental health and substance use conditions among incarcerated individuals, which facilitates a need for new advocacy and clinical positions, improved access to medications and health services, enhanced staff training, and stronger oversight and data collection. He argues the bill is an

important step toward improving care for incarcerated people and ensuring they return to their communities healthier and better supported.

Senate Democrats, Connecticut General Assembly: Members of the Connecticut Senate Democratic Caucus support the bill because recurring complaints and oversight findings have shown that incarcerated individuals often face barriers to accessing adequate medical and mental healthcare. They highlight the findings of the Correction Ombuds' Conditions of Confinement Report, which identified widespread issues limiting access to care across facilities. The Caucus supports the bill's efforts to improve prison healthcare and prohibit denying treatment or medication based on an incarcerated person's inability to pay a copayment.

Barbara Fair: Barbara Fair supports many provisions of the bill because improvements to medical and mental healthcare in corrections facilities are urgently needed after decades of neglect and inadequate treatment. Incarcerated individuals have suffered serious harm due to poor oversight and malpractice, making meaningful reform necessary to protect their health and dignity. However, she expresses concern about placing medical professionals within the Office of the Correction Ombuds at this time, arguing that the office may not yet have the capacity to provide effective oversight.

Emily McCave: Emily McCave supports the bill because it would strengthen access to medical and mental healthcare for incarcerated individuals by creating new advocacy and clinical roles, improving continuity of care, and prohibiting denial of treatment based on inability to pay copayments. Trauma can play a significant role in incarceration, making provisions that require trauma-informed training for corrections staff prudent. She urges passage of the bill and recommends expanding the student loan reimbursement program to include social workers to help recruit qualified professionals to corrections facilities.

Denise Paley: Denise Paley supports the bill because improved health and mental health services are urgently needed in corrections facilities, where many incarcerated individuals suffer from serious untreated conditions. Statewide data shows that inadequate care, poor living conditions, and lack of treatment have caused significant harm to incarcerated people with mental illness. She argues that the bill is an important step toward ensuring people in state custody receive proper care and are better prepared to return to their communities.

Laura Prior, Health Policy Chair, CT APRN Society: Laura Prior supports the bill because it recognizes the role of advanced practice registered nurses in expanding access to health and mental healthcare within corrections facilities. APRNs are highly trained clinicians who can diagnose conditions, prescribe medications, and manage patient care independently, potentially addressing healthcare workforce shortages. She favors the bill's inclusion of APRNs as eligible providers for the Correction Mental Health Clinician role to improve access to quality care for incarcerated individuals.

Testimony of MSW Students from Quinnipiac University:

Anonymous (769) Julia Mendlovsky Caroline Pawlak Alexandra Rodriguez

They each provided testimony in support of the bill, explaining that it would improve access to medical and mental healthcare for incarcerated individuals by establishing positions such as

a Correction Patient Advocate and a Mental Health Correctional Clinician. They emphasized that people in state custody should not lose access to necessary healthcare and supported prohibiting the denial of treatment due to inability to pay copayments. They also stressed the importance of addressing trauma and mental health needs within corrections facilities through trauma-informed practices and stronger oversight. Some recommended expanding the bill's student loan reimbursement program to include social workers to help recruit and retain qualified professionals.

Heather Somers, CT State Senator: Heather Somers supports the bill because it would strengthen healthcare delivery in corrections facilities and help address staffing shortages that contribute to delays in care. The bill's nurse student loan reimbursement program would be an important workforce investment to attract qualified medical professionals to Department of Correction facilities. She notes the measure is part of a broader effort to improve healthcare access, quality, and outcomes within the correctional system.

Jess Zaccagnino, Policy Counsel, American Civil Liberties Union of Connecticut (ACLU-CT): Jess Zaccagnino supports the bill because it would improve oversight, staffing, and accountability for healthcare in corrections facilities. The bill would strengthen accountability and safeguards by improving medication management, enhancing staff training, reviewing nutrition and health services, and establishing stronger oversight structures. She argues these reforms are necessary to improve healthcare standards and protect the well-being of incarcerated individuals.

Anonymous, 775: Supports the bill because they have witnessed how delayed and inadequate healthcare in corrections facilities can have serious consequences, including untreated illnesses and poor mental healthcare. There is a need to review and improve prison nutrition due to health issues such as hypertension and diabetes. Meeting basic health and dietary needs is essential to treating incarcerated individuals with dignity and supporting rehabilitation.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None expressed.

Reported by: Justin Lamoureux

Date: April 9, 2026