

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Correctional facilities must balance a variety of complex factors when delivering health care to adults in custody of those facilities, including unique legal, safety, and demographic considerations. Oregon's Department of Corrections (DOC) is responsible for the custody and care of over 12,000 individuals criminally sentenced to one of the state's 12 correctional facilities. Adults in DOC custody tend to be more ill than the general population, including higher prevalence of mental health issues and substance use disorder. Ensuring timely access to appropriate health care services plays a vital role in the health of adults in custody during incarceration.

### House Bill 3035 and the Joint Task Force on Corrections Medical Care

[House Bill 3035](#) (2021) established the Joint Task Force on Corrections Medical Care to review specific aspects of DOC's health care delivery system, including the grievance process, medical standards of care, and progress on the adoption of an electronic health record (EHR) system. The measure charged the Task Force with delivering a report that may include recommendations for legislation to the interim committees of the Legislative Assembly related to health and the judiciary. The Task Force met ten times between March and September 2022 to learn about the factors impacting DOC delivery of health care and develop recommendations for ways to improve access to health care for adults in DOC custody. This report reflects Task Force recommendations for both DOC and the Legislative Assembly.

### Recommendations

The Task Force recognizes and affirms that implementation of an EHR is essential to both measuring and improving the access to health care services for adults in DOC custody. As DOC's EHR procurement was still currently in process at the finalization of this report, the Task Force makes the following recommendations:

#### For the Department of Corrections.

1. **Continuous Quality Improvement.** DOC should ensure its continuous quality improvement program includes regular, structured internal and external review of health care-related grievances and care decisions to ensure that DOC meets community standards for access and timeliness in delivering care to adults in DOC custody. Implementation of an EHR system should support continuous quality improvement by supporting regular, publicly accessible reporting of key metrics.
2. **EHR Implementation.** DOC should ensure EHR implementation prioritizes interoperability, continuity of care, and immediate access to necessary information.
3. **Workforce.** DOC should pursue specified efforts to expand and utilize its health care workforce.
4. **Access.** DOC should leverage opportunities to use connected technologies to improve access, including telemedicine.

5. **Reporting.** DOC should ensure inclusion of specified information in the report due to the interim committees of the Legislative Assembly related to the judiciary and health care by December 31, 2022. Regular reporting should be established until EHR system implementation supports public reporting.

#### For the Legislative Assembly.

6. **Office of the Ombudsman.** The Office of the Ombudsman in the Governor's Office should continue to be funded while individuals are incarcerated in Oregon correctional facilities
7. **Mental health and Substance Use Disorder Funding.** DOC should be funded to provide mental health and substance use disorder treatment and services for the entire period of incarceration.
8. **EHR Implementation.** Future approval and funding for DOC's EHR system implementation should be contingent on demonstration of system's interoperability, promotion of continuity of care, and facilitate of immediate access to necessary information.
9. **Early Medical Release.** The Legislative Assembly should consider the creation of early medical (i.e. compassionate) release standards.

This report is available at:

<https://olis.oregonlegislature.gov/liz/202111/Committees/JTFCMC/2022-09-14-09-00/MeetingMaterials>