

Submitter: Keiren Bond  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Health Care  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB293  
Chair Patterson, Vice Chair Hayden, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing today to express my strong support for Senate Bill 293-1, which addresses the urgent and long-overdue need for reform in Oregon's prison healthcare system.

The Oregon Department of Corrections (ODOC) has failed to consistently provide basic, humane healthcare to incarcerated Oregonians. We have heard far too many stories of care being delayed, denied, or rendered inadequate—stories of people suffering needlessly, of worsening medical conditions, and even of preventable deaths. This is not just unacceptable—it is a moral and public health crisis that demands immediate legislative action.

Recent reporting by The Oregonian has exposed the scale of the problem: two top administrators fired after a critical review, a desperate letter to Governor Kotek from an ODOC physician regarding cancer treatment delays, a million-dollar payout over negligent care that left a man permanently disfigured, and ongoing staffing failures with more than half of ODOC's doctors having departed in the past year. These are not isolated incidents. They paint a systemic picture of dysfunction and disregard that cannot be ignored.

SB 293-1 proposes four common-sense, necessary reforms:

It guarantees care for pre-existing conditions, ensuring that medical issues don't go untreated simply because they began before incarceration.

It ends the harmful practice of denying care based on the amount of time left in someone's sentence.

It requires ODOC to document in patients' medical records the specific reasons for any care denial—creating transparency and accountability.

It ensures, at a minimum, access to prescriptions listed in the current federal formulary, replacing ODOC's outdated and insufficient list.

These changes are essential to uphold the basic rights and dignity of incarcerated individuals. Moreover, improving prison healthcare benefits all of us. People reenter our communities healthier and more stable, which supports public health and safety

for everyone.

The problems in ODOC will not fix themselves. The Legislature must intervene, and SB 293-1 is the first meaningful step. I urge you to support this bill and demonstrate your commitment to justice, equity, and human dignity.

Thank you for your time and your leadership on this critical issue.

Sincerely,  
Keiren Bond  
Portland, Oregon