

# YES on SB293-1

# Improving Medical Services in Oregon Prisons

**SB 293-1 will improve medical care for Oregonians in the custody of the Oregon Department of Corrections and have a positive impact on the health and welfare of our communities.**

It is well understood that medical services in Oregon's prisons are woefully inadequate and harming the health and lives of incarcerated people.<sup>1</sup> Dire medical services are resulting in death, serious and debilitating medical conditions, medical staff retention problems, and overall inhumane treatment of incarcerated Oregonians.

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**Staff would just as soon have you die.”**

– Woman formerly incarcerated at CCCF, who had several organs removed four years after entering CCCF, commenting on the culture of medical care at ODOC.

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**We don't know if we'll walk out or leave in a body bag.”**

– Woman incarcerated at CCCF whose friend was found dead in her cell.

Adults in custody face unique health challenges in prison due to the punitive staff culture, limited access to healthcare, poor nutrition, lack of physical activity, and an overall harsh living environment. Incarcerated individuals often come from marginalized backgrounds with pre-existing health conditions that can worsen due to inadequate medical care and unhealthy prison conditions. Ensuring that adults in custody receive appropriate and comprehensive medical care is not just a moral and legal obligation but also a sensible step toward reducing recidivism and promoting a healthier society, as more than 95% of incarcerated people will eventually return to our broader communities.

**We must begin to meaningfully address Oregon's prison healthcare deficiencies.**



<sup>1</sup> National Commission on Correctional Health Care, in a 2024 report, found CCCF “failed to meet half of 38 essential standards. The 19 problem areas included: delayed health screenings and treatment, as well as inadequate care for patients with chronic conditions like diabetes.” *Report: Medical visits backlogged at Oregon women's prison as hundreds wait months for care*, Oregon Capital Chronicle, Ben Botkin, (5/22/2024); “There were consistent reports that medical and mental health care is inadequate, delayed or denied, poor in quality, and not calibrated to the needs of women (e.g., reproductive health).” Gender Informed Practices Assessment (GIPA) of CCCF, 2023 state commissioned report.

# What does SB 293-1 do?

This bill requires the Oregon Department of Corrections (ODOC) to:

- 1. Provide medical care to adults in custody for pre-existing conditions.** Currently, ODOC refuses to continue care for a person if the condition needing treatment existed prior to incarceration.
- 2. Not consider the remaining duration of incarceration for an adult in custody in medical care decisions.** Currently, ODOC can refuse care based on how much time the person has left before their release from prison. This not only jeopardizes the health of incarcerated Oregonians, but the health and welfare of the communities they release to.
- 3. Document the specific reasons for any denial or refusal of medical care in the adult in custody's medical file.** ODOC does not consistently record specific reasons for its decision to deny or refuse medical care for adults in custody.
- 4. Provide adults in custody access to, at a minimum, prescriptions listed on the formulary adopted by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services in effect on June 1, 2025.** This would bring ODOC in line with the current formulary guidance provided by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

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***“Many of the [ODOC] doctors were sidelined or left amid a toxic atmosphere where medical staff said they experienced retribution for questioning substandard care for inmates suffering ailments of all kinds: genital herpes to pelvic organ prolapse, bone infections to metastasized cancer.”***

– ‘Turmoil at the top’: More than half of state’s prison doctors on leave, fired or left in last year, *The Oregonian/OregonLive*, Ted Sickinger, (2/28/2025).

## ***ODOC Medical Services in the news recently:***

***‘Turmoil at the top’: More than half of Oregon’s prison doctors on leave, fired or left in last year***

*The Oregonian/OregonLive*, Ted Sickinger, (2/28/2025).

***Fired Oregon prison health leaders delayed treatment, retaliated against staff, report claims***

*Oregon Public Broadcasting*, Conrad Wilson, (2/5/2025).

***Oregon lawmakers ignore beleaguered prison medical system in first hearing with agency executive***

*The Oregonian/OregonLive*, Noelle Crombie, (1/24/2025).

***Mother of deceased Oregon inmate files wrongful death lawsuit against corrections agency: The \$4 million lawsuit alleges prison doctors could have prevented her son’s death from prostate cancer with timely treatment***

*Oregon Capital Chronicle*, Ben Botkin, (1/6/2025).

***Oregon woman struggles with permanent disability after untreated head injury in prison***

*Oregon Capital Chronicle*, Ben Botkin, (11/22/2024).



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