



Legislative Testimony

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

April 26, 2017

The Honorable Mitch Greenlick, Chair
House Committee on Health Care
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Senate Bill 367A

Chair Greenlick and members of the House Committee on Health Care, I am Michael Gower, Assistant Director of the Operations Divisions for the Oregon Department of Corrections (DOC). I am here to testify in support of SB 367A and answer any questions.

What the Bill Does:

SB 367A permits a health care provider to disclose protected health information of an inmate in a correctional facility to the physician of an employee of a correctional facility who is exposed to bodily fluids of the inmate if exposure is substantial and the inmate has tested positive for HIV, hepatitis B or C, or other communicable diseases.

Background Information:

While Oregon operates one of the safest correctional systems in the country, assaults do occur within our prisons – assaults between inmates and assaults by inmates on staff. Correctional staff can be exposed to bodily fluids when addressing inmate-on-inmate assaults, rendering first aid, or other circumstances. In the case of inmate-on-staff assaults, sometimes those assaults occur with the use of bodily fluids. This can be stressful, traumatic, and sometimes dangerous for our staff, especially if the inmate has a communicable disease.

This bill streamlines the process for staff to receive information about the health status of an inmate when that staff person has been exposed to the inmate's bodily fluids.

Issues Addressed by the Bill:

If passed, this bill would support DOC staff wellness by helping staff members make critical medical decisions – with their physicians – when they have been assaulted or exposed to an inmate's bodily fluids in some other way. As you may know, staff wellness is our agency's top initiative, and this bill supports that initiative.

Requested Action:

For the reasons explained above, the department asks this committee to vote SB 367A out of committee with a do pass recommendation.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Submitted by:

Oregon Department of Corrections

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