

Public Health Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-6546

AN ACT REQUIRING A STUDY OF THE PREVALENCE OF THE HEPATITIS C
Title: VIRUS IN CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND FACILITIES.

Vote Date: 3/1/2019

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 2/25/2019

File No.:

***Disclaimer:** The following JOINT FAVORABLE Report is prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and does not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose.*

SPONSORS OF BILL:

Public Health Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill would create a study of Hepatitis C in correctional facilities, conducted by the Department of Correction, the Department of Public Health, the Insurance Department and the Comptroller. This bill was proposed because Hepatitis C is a highly prevalent condition in correctional facilities and it is cheaper to take preventative measures as opposed to spending money on treatment.

***Verbal amendment:** added a requirement for the study to include the feasibility of leveraging available federal funds to cover the cost of such treatment.*

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Department of Public Health: DPH supports this legislation. According to the testimony, Hepatitis C (HCV) is “the most common infectious disease” in the United States. Many individuals are not diagnosed soon enough, potentially leading to chronic health problems. In regard to HCV and incarceration, the CDC estimates that there are over two million individuals in American jails and prisons that have been infected. HCV spreads throughout the incarcerated population primarily through sharing needles or tools utilized in piercing and other activities. As noted earlier, DPH has placed HCV on the list of required reported conditions; however, it is often undiagnosed, especially in the incarcerated population. HCV often does not present symptoms, which makes testing and availability of care a critical need. HCV is a curable condition. DPH intends to expand its HCV testing programs, recognizing that prevention is the most cost-effective method. Given the reasons above, DPH supports this bill.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

None submitted.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None submitted.

Reported by: Meagan Schantz

Date: 3/7/19