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**Act No. 62 (H.503). Crimes and criminal procedures; health**

**An act relating to criminal justice**

This act makes a number of changes to various criminal justice issues, including:

- *Bail*. Bail cannot be imposed if a defendant was cited for a misdemeanor and showed up at the initial appearance.
- *Pretrial Communications*. Requires the Court Administrator, the Department of State's Attorneys and Sheriffs, the Office of the Defender General, and the Vermont Chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union to work together and with other interested parties to examine options for facilitating pretrial communication between the courts and defendants with a goal of reducing the risk of nonappearance by defendants and jointly provide options and costs of such options to the Joint Legislative Justice Oversight Committee on or before October 15, 2017.
- *Fentanyl*. Creates stand-alone crime of dispensing, selling, or trafficking fentanyl with penalties ranging from 3 to 30 years
- *National Precursor Log Exchange (NPLEx)*. Reestablishes requirements for using NPLEx to track purchases of over-the-counter medications containing ephedrine/pseudoephedrine/phenylpropanolamine.
- *Cannabidiol*. Requires that, upon approval of one or more prescription drugs containing cannabidiol, such drugs shall be legal in Vermont and the Department of Health shall amend its rules to include such prescriptions.
- *Animal Cruelty*. Bans bestiality. Increases penalty from one to two years for intentionally killing or attempting to kill an animal belonging to another or by torturing, administering poison to, or cruelly beating or mutilating an animal. Increases penalty for aggravated animal cruelty from three to five years
- *Electronic Monitoring*. Eases requirements for requesting home detention in lieu of incarceration pending trial and directs the Department of Corrections to establish an active electronic monitoring program with real-time enforcement.

Multiple effective dates, beginning on June 7, 2017