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Act No. 153 (H.874). Corrections; human services; medical care; inmates; prescription drugs

An act relating to inmate access to prescription drugs

This act amends the process for providing inmates access to prescription drugs after admission to a correctional facility as follows:

Sec. 1 requires that an inmate be screened for substance abuse disorders, including opioid use disorders, within 24 hours after admission to a correctional facility. Sec. 1 also requires that, at the time of admission to a correctional facility, an inmate who is under the care of certain community-based medical professionals and is taking medication, including medication prescribed in the course of medicated-assisted treatment, be entitled to continue use of the medication. In addition, Sec. 1 provides a process for the Department of Corrections to make exceptions for continuing to provide inmates access to medications that were prescribed prior to admission to a correctional facility.

Sec. 1a amends 18 V.S.A. § 4750 to include a definition for “medication-assisted treatment.”

Sec. 2 requires the Department of Corrections to collect certain information on the use of prescription drugs by inmates in a correctional facility. After consultation with the Prisoners’ Rights Office, the Department is required to report its findings to the House Committee on Corrections and Institutions and the Senate Committee on Institutions by January 31, 2019.

Multiple effective dates, beginning on May 21, 2018