

1 S.193

2 Introduced by Senator Lyons

3 Referred to Committee on Judiciary

4 Date: January 6, 2026

5 Subject: Criminal procedure; public safety; mental health; forensic facility;
6 competency restoration

7 Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to establish a
8 forensic facility for certain criminal justice-involved persons; to require the
9 court, unless contrary to the interests of justice, to dismiss misdemeanor
10 charges against a person who has been found incompetent to stand trial if, after
11 the finding of incompetence, the case remains inactive for a continuous period
12 of time equal to or greater than the maximum sentence for the offense; and to
13 limit the applicability of the Vermont Rules of Evidence in proceedings
14 involving competency restoration and granting or revoking conditional release
15 from a forensic facility.

16 An act relating to establishing a forensic facility for certain criminal justice-
17 involved persons

1 It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

2 ~~Sec. 1. 13 V.S.A. § 4815a is added to read:~~

3 § 4815a. COMPETENCY RESTORATION SERVICES WITHIN
4 FORENSIC FACILITY

5 (a) A person shall be transferred to the forensic facility established in
6 section 4826 of this title if the person has been charged with an offense
7 punishable by a life sentence, the person is not deemed a “person in need of
8 treatment” pursuant to 13 V.S.A. § 7101, and the person has been found not
9 competent to stand trial.

10 (b) Upon admission, the forensic facility shall cause the person to be
11 evaluated for competency to stand trial not less often than the shorter of either
12 every six months or upon the determination by the forensic facility’s clinical
13 services director that the person is likely competent to stand trial. The results
14 of all evaluations shall be supplied to the court and the parties to the
15 underlying criminal action.

16 (c) A person shall remain at the forensic facility until the person receives a
17 verdict in the person’s underlying criminal case or until the charges against the
18 person have been dismissed.

19 (d) The person shall receive competency restoration services while at the
20 forensic facility according to a plan approved by the forensic facility’s clinical
21 services director. Such services may include any appropriate combination of

1 ~~medication, education, accommodations, habilitation, or other services~~
2 identified as necessary or proper to achieve and maintain competency to stand
3 trial. The person's refusal to receive competency restoration services shall not
4 be grounds for release or dismissal from the forensic facility.

5 (e) Competency restoration services shall be maintained until the person
6 receives a verdict in the person's underlying criminal case.

7 (f) The Commissioner shall receive prior approval of the Criminal Division
8 of the Superior Court where the person's underlying criminal charge is
9 pending for any competency restoration plan involving involuntary
10 medication. The court shall not approve involuntary medication unless the
11 court finds that the involuntary medication is clinically appropriate and is
12 likely to aid in the restoration of the person's competency to stand trial.

13 Sec. 2. 13 V.S.A. § 4817 is amended to read:

14 § 4817. COMPETENCY TO STAND TRIAL; DETERMINATION;

15 DISMISSAL

16 * * *

17 (e) When a person has been found incompetent to stand trial for an alleged
18 misdemeanor offense, the charges against the person shall be dismissed with
19 prejudice if, after the finding of incompetence, the case remains inactive for a
20 ~~continuous period of time equal to or greater than the maximum sentence for~~

1 ~~the offense. Dismissal under this section shall not be required if the court~~
2 ~~finds that dismissing the case would be contrary to the interest of justice.~~

3 Sec. 3. 13 V.S.A § 4819a is added to read:

4 § 4819a. FORENSIC FACILITY PLACEMENT FOR PERSONS

5 ACQUITTED OF CERTAIN CRIMES

6 (a) A person shall be transferred to the forensic facility established in
7 section 4826 of this title if the person has been acquitted of an offense
8 punishable by a life sentence pursuant to section 4819 of this chapter and the
9 person is not deemed a “person in need of treatment” pursuant to 18 V.S.A.
10 § 7101.

11 (b)(1) A hearing shall be held by the Criminal Division of the Superior
12 Court within 40 days following admission to the forensic facility, unless that
13 period is extended by the court.

14 (2) At the hearing, the court shall order the person committed to the
15 forensic facility, unless the person establishes by clear and convincing
16 evidence that the person is no longer suffering from a mental disease or defect,
17 that upon the person’s release, would create a substantial risk of bodily injury
18 to another person or serious damage to the property of another person. If the
19 court finds that the person has established the person’s burden under this
20 subdivision, the court may enter an order consistent with subdivision (d)(2) of
21 this section.

1 ~~(2) Prior to the date of the hearing, the court shall order that a~~
2 ~~psychiatric or psychological examination of the person be conducted and that a~~
3 ~~psychiatric or psychological report be filed with the court addressing the~~
4 ~~person's history and present symptoms; a description of the psychiatric,~~
5 ~~psychological, and medical tests that were employed and their results; the~~
6 ~~examiner's findings, and the examiner's opinions as to diagnosis, prognosis;~~
7 ~~and whether the person is suffering from a mental disease or defect that, upon~~
8 ~~the person's release, would create a substantial risk of bodily injury to another~~
9 ~~person or serious damage to the property of another person.~~

10 (c) A placement of a person at the forensic facility shall be for an
11 indeterminate period and shall not have a specified end date. The person shall
12 not be released until the person establishes by clear and convincing evidence
13 the person is no longer suffering from a mental disease or defect that, upon the
14 person's release, would create a substantial risk of bodily injury to another
15 person or serious damage to the property of another person.

16 (d)(1) The Commissioner of Corrections shall petition the unit of the
17 Criminal Division of the Superior Court in which the acquittal was returned
18 not less frequently than the shorter of every five years or upon certification by
19 the clinical services director that the person is no longer suffering from a
20 mental disease or defect that, upon the person's release, would create a

1 ~~substantial risk of bodily injury to another person or serious damage to the~~
2 ~~property of another person.~~

3 (2) If the reviewing court finds by clear and convincing evidence that
4 person is no longer suffering from a mental disease or defect that, upon the
5 person's release, would create a substantial risk of bodily injury to another
6 person or serious damage to the property of another person, the court shall:

7 (A) order the release of the person under a prescribed regimen of
8 medical, psychiatric, or psychological care or treatment that the forensic
9 facility's clinical services director has certified as appropriate and that has
10 been found by the court to be appropriate; and

11 (B) order, as an explicit condition of release, that the person comply
12 with the prescribed regimen of medical, psychiatric, or psychological care or
13 treatment together with any other conditions appropriate to protect the public.

14 (e) The Commissioner of Corrections shall actively monitor compliance
15 with orders issued under subdivision (d)(2) of this section and shall
16 immediately return the person to the forensic facility if the Commissioner or
17 the Commissioner's designees determine that the person is non-compliant with
18 the order and that the noncompliance may create a risk of bodily injury to
19 another person or serious damage to the property of another. The
20 Commissioner shall notify the Criminal Division of the Superior Court in the
21 ~~county where the person was acquitted upon return of the person to the~~

1 ~~forensic facility. Upon readmission, the court shall hold a hearing where the~~
2 Commissioner shall have the burden of establishing by a preponderance of the
3 evidence that the person was noncompliant with the court's order for
4 conditional release and that the noncompliance creates a risk of bodily injury
5 to another person or serious damage to the property of another.

6 Sec. 4. 13 V.S.A. § 4826 is added to read:

7 § 4826. FORENSIC FACILITY

8 (a) The Commissioner of Corrections shall establish and operate a locked
9 secure forensic facility for the assessment and safe housing of persons who are
10 subject to any stage of proceedings under this chapter or who have been
11 acquitted pursuant to section 4819 of this chapter. The forensic facility shall
12 not refuse any persons it is ordered to admit, nor shall it require any clinical or
13 diagnostic prerequisites for admission. All forensic, clinical, and competency
14 restoration services provided at the forensic facility shall be overseen by a
15 clinical services director.

16 (b) Any records related to a person placed at the forensic facility shall be
17 exempt from public inspection and copying under the Public Records Act and
18 shall be kept confidential, except that records shall be made available to the
19 parties in the underlying criminal case upon request.

20 (c) Persons shall be admitted to and maintained at the forensic facility

21 ~~pursuant to sections 4815a and 4819a of this title.~~

1 ~~(d) The Commissioner shall adopt rules pursuant to 3 V.S.A. chapter 25 to~~
2 ~~implement this section.~~

3 Sec. 5. RULEMAKING; FORENSIC FACILITY

4 ~~Pending the adoption of permanent rules pursuant to 3 V.S.A. chapter 25 to~~
5 ~~implement the provisions of Secs. 1–4 of this act, the Commissioner of~~
6 ~~Corrections shall adopt emergency rules pursuant to 3 V.S.A. § 844 not later~~
7 ~~than January 1, 2027, which shall be deemed to meet the emergency~~
8 ~~rulemaking standard in 3 V.S.A. § 844(a).~~

9 Sec. 6. Rule 1101 of the Vermont Rules of Evidence is amended to read:

10 RULE 1101. APPLICABILITY OF RULES

11 (a) Rules applicable. Except as otherwise provided in subdivision (b),
12 these rules apply to all actions and proceedings in the courts of this state.

13 (b) Rules inapplicable. The rules other than those with respect to
14 privileges do not apply in the following situations:

15 * * *

16 (3) Miscellaneous Proceedings. Proceedings for extradition or
17 rendition; inquest proceedings; except as otherwise provided by statute or rule
18 promulgated by the Supreme Court, sentencing or granting or revoking
19 probation; proceedings concerning competency restoration; granting or
20 ~~revoking conditional release from a forensic facility; finding probable cause~~

1 ~~for arrests without warrant and issuance of citations, warrants for arrest,~~
2 ~~criminal summonses, and search warrants.~~

3 * * *

4 Sec. 7. EFFECTIVE DATE

5 ~~This act shall take effect on July 1, 2026.~~

Sec. 1. 13 V.S.A. § 4815a is added to read:

§ 4815a. COMPETENCY RESTORATION SERVICES WITHIN
FORENSIC FACILITY

(a) A person shall be transferred to the forensic facility established in
section 4826 of this title if the person:

(1) has been charged with an offense punishable by a life sentence;

(2)(A) has been held without bail pursuant to section 7553 of this title;

or

(B) if the person is not held without bail pursuant to section 7553 of
this title, the person's release would create a substantial risk of bodily injury to
another person;

(3) is not currently receiving treatment through an order of
hospitalization pursuant to 18 V.S.A. § 7619 or section 4822 of this title; and

(4) has been found not competent to stand trial.

(b)(1)(A) Upon admission, the forensic facility shall cause the person to be
evaluated for competency to stand trial not less often than the shorter of
either:

(i) every six months; or

(ii) upon the determination by the forensic facility's clinical
services director that the person is likely competent to stand trial.

(B) The results of all evaluations shall be supplied to the court and
the parties to the underlying criminal action.

(2)(A) At the request of a party, the court may order that a second or
subsequent evaluation include an opinion on whether the person's competency
can be restored. If the court finds that the person may be found likely
competent to stand trial, the court shall immediately notify the State's Attorney
and the person's counsel in the criminal case. If the court finds by clear and

convincing evidence that the person cannot be restored to competency, the court shall order continued commitment of the person, taking into account the least restrictive conditions applicable, unless subdivision (B) of this subdivision (2) applies.

(B) If the court finds that the release of a person who cannot be restored to competency would not create a substantial risk of bodily injury to another person, the court shall:

(i) order the release of the person under a prescribed regimen of medical, psychiatric, or psychological care or treatment that the forensic facility's clinical services director has certified as appropriate and that has been found by the court to be appropriate; and

(ii) order, as an explicit condition of release, that the person comply with the prescribed regimen of medical, psychiatric, or psychological care or treatment together with any other conditions appropriate to protect the public.

(c) The person shall remain at the forensic facility until the person is restored to competency or until there is a final disposition of the charges against the person.

(d) The person shall receive competency restoration services while at the forensic facility according to a plan approved by the forensic facility's clinical services director. Such services shall include any appropriate combination of medication, education, accommodations, habilitation, or other services identified as necessary or proper to achieve and maintain competency to stand trial. The person's refusal to receive competency restoration services shall not be grounds for release or dismissal from the forensic facility.

(e) Competency restoration services shall be provided to the person at the forensic facility, or at another location as part of a discharge plan, until the person is restored to competency or until there is a final disposition of the charges against the person.

(f)(1) The Commissioner shall actively monitor compliance with orders issued pursuant to subdivision (2)(B) of subsection (b) and shall immediately return a person to the forensic facility if:

(A) the person was previously restored to competence pursuant to this section and released from the facility;

(B) the Commissioner has reason to believe that the person is again incompetent; and

(C) the person's continued release would create a substantial risk of bodily injury to another person.

(2) The Commissioner shall notify the court where the person was committed upon return of the person to the forensic facility. Upon readmission, the court shall hold a hearing at which the State's Attorney shall have the burden of establishing by clear and convincing evidence that the person is not competent. If the court finds that the person is not competent, the court shall order the person readmitted to the forensic facility for competency restoration treatment pursuant to this section. If the court finds that the person is competent, the court shall order the person restored to the status the person had when the person was returned to the facility.

(g) The Commissioner shall receive prior approval of the Criminal Division of the Superior Court where the person's underlying criminal charge is pending for any competency restoration plan involving involuntary medication. The court shall not approve involuntary medication unless the court finds that:

(1) the involuntary medication is medically appropriate;

(2) the involuntary medication serves the important governmental interests of bringing to trial an individual accused of a serious crime and ensuring a fair, timely prosecution;

(3) the involuntary medication significantly furthers these important governmental interests by making it substantially likely to render the defendant competent to stand trial; and

(4) any alternative, less intrusive treatments are unlikely to achieve the same results.

Sec. 2. 13 V.S.A. § 4817 is amended to read:

§ 4817. COMPETENCY TO STAND TRIAL; DETERMINATION;
DISMISSAL

* * *

(e) When a person has been found incompetent to stand trial for an alleged misdemeanor offense, the charges against the person shall be dismissed without prejudice if, after the finding of incompetence, the case remains inactive for a continuous period of time equal to or greater than the maximum sentence for the offense. Dismissal under this section shall not be required if the court finds that dismissing the case would be contrary to the interests of justice.

Sec. 3. 13 V.S.A § 4819a is added to read:

§ 4819a. FORENSIC FACILITY PLACEMENT FOR PERSONS
ACQUITTED OF CERTAIN CRIMES

(a) A person who is charged with an offense punishable by a life sentence and is found not guilty only by reason of insanity at the time of the offense charged shall be committed to a forensic facility pursuant to this section. This section shall not be construed to prohibit the temporary transfer of a person requiring inpatient treatment through an order of hospitalization pursuant to 18 V.S.A. § 7619 or section 4822 of this title.

(b)(1) A hearing shall be held by the court where the person was tried within 48 hours following admission to the forensic facility, unless that period is extended by the court.

(2) Prior to the date of the hearing, the court shall order that a forensic risk assessment of the person be conducted that includes:

(A) the person's history and present dangerousness;

(B) a description of any tests that were employed and the results of the tests;

(C) the examiner's findings; and

(D) the examiner's opinion as to whether the person's release would create a substantial risk of bodily injury to another person.

(3)(A) At the hearing, the court shall order the person committed to the forensic facility if the State's Attorney establishes by clear and convincing evidence that the person is suffering from a qualifying condition that, upon the person's release, would create a substantial risk of bodily injury to another person.

(B) If the court finds that the State's Attorney has not established by clear and convincing evidence that the person is suffering from a qualifying condition that, upon the person's release, would create a substantial risk of bodily injury to another person, the court shall enter an order releasing the person pursuant to subdivision (e)(2) of this section.

(c) A person committed to the forensic facility pursuant to this section shall not be released until the court finds pursuant to subsection (e) of this section that the person is no longer suffering from a qualifying condition that, upon the person's release, would create a substantial risk of bodily injury to another person.

(d) The Commissioner of Corrections shall, taking into account the least restrictive conditions applicable, provide adequate care and individualized treatment at the forensic facility to persons ordered committed pursuant to this section. In order that the Commissioner may adequately determine the nature of the person's condition and needs, all persons committed pursuant to this

section shall be promptly examined by qualified personnel in order to provide a proper evaluation, diagnosis, and treatment plan.

(e)(1)(A)(i) The State's Attorney shall petition the committing court for evaluation of the person not less often than the shorter of either:

(I) every six months after the date that the person is committed pursuant to subdivision (b)(3)(A) of this section; or

(II) certification to the Commissioner of Corrections by the forensic facility's clinical services director that the person is no longer suffering from a qualifying condition that, upon the person's release, would create a substantial risk of bodily injury to another person.

(ii) The Commissioner of Corrections shall provide all reports required under this section to the State's Attorney, who shall file them with the petition.

(B) A person committed pursuant to subdivision (b)(3)(A) of this section may petition the committing court for release on the grounds that the person is no longer suffering from a qualifying condition that, upon the person's release, would create a substantial risk of bodily injury to another person. A petition shall not be filed pursuant to this subdivision (B) until at least 90 days after the issuance of the commitment order.

(2) If the reviewing court finds by clear and convincing evidence that the person is no longer suffering from a qualifying condition that, upon the person's release, would create a substantial risk of bodily injury to another person, the court shall:

(A) order the release of the person under a prescribed regimen of medical, psychiatric, or psychological care or treatment that the forensic facility's clinical services director has certified as appropriate and that has been found by the court to be appropriate; and

(B) order, as an explicit condition of release, that the person comply with the prescribed regimen of medical, psychiatric, or psychological care or treatment together with any other conditions appropriate to protect the public.

(3) If the court finds that the person is suffering from a qualifying condition that, upon the person's release, would create a substantial risk of bodily injury to another person, the court shall deny the petition and order the person committed to the forensic facility for continued treatment pursuant to this section.

(f) The Commissioner shall actively monitor compliance with orders issued pursuant to subdivision (e)(2) of this section and shall immediately return the person to the forensic facility if the Commissioner determines that the person is

noncompliant with the order and that the noncompliance may create a risk of bodily injury to another person. The Commissioner shall notify the court where the person was committed upon return of the person to the forensic facility. Upon readmission, the court shall hold a hearing at which the State's Attorney shall have the burden of establishing by a preponderance of the evidence that the person was noncompliant with the court's order for conditional release and that the noncompliance creates a risk of bodily injury to another person.

(g) At any hearing under this section, the victim may express the victim's views concerning the offense and preferences for the person's placement and care, and the court may consider the victim's testimony.

Sec. 4. 13 V.S.A. § 4826 is added to read:

§ 4826. FORENSIC FACILITY; DEFINITIONS

(a)(1) As used in this chapter:

(A) "Forensic facility" means a locked facility or placement that:

(i) the Department of Corrections provides for the secure evaluation, treatment, and care of persons involved in the legal system who do not require a hospitalization level of care; and

(ii) is required for the custody, control, correctional treatment, and rehabilitation of persons transferred pursuant to subsections 4815a(a) and 4819a(a) of this title.

(B) "Qualifying condition" means any condition whether mental, congenital, or traumatic, however acquired or developed, or any other circumstance that resulted in the person being determined:

(i) incompetent to stand trial; or

(ii) not guilty by reason of insanity.

(2) The evaluations required by this chapter may be conducted pursuant to contracts entered into between the ~~Commissioner of General Services~~ Commissioner of Buildings and General Services and evaluation providers.

~~(3) The Commissioner of Corrections shall establish and operate a locked secure forensic facility for the secure evaluation, treatment, and care of persons who have been transferred pursuant to subsections 4815a(a) and 4819a(a) of this title. The forensic facility shall not refuse any persons it is ordered to admit, and it shall not require any clinical or diagnostic prerequisites for admission. All forensic, clinical, and competency restoration services provided at the forensic facility shall be overseen by a clinical services director.~~

(b) The Commissioner of Corrections shall establish and operate a locked secure forensic facility for the secure evaluation, treatment, and care of individuals who have been transferred pursuant to subsections 4815a(a) and 4819a(a) of this title. The forensic facility shall:

(1) be designed and operated in a manner that supports a therapeutic, recovery-oriented, and trauma-informed environment comparable to a community-based residential treatment setting, while maintaining appropriate levels of safety and security;

(2) not refuse any persons it is ordered to admit and shall not require any clinical or diagnostic prerequisites for admission;

(3) provide for the safe housing and management of persons, including the ability to separate the population by sex or gender and to otherwise address clinical, safety, or operational considerations as appropriate, including the possible operation of multiple facilities;

(4) employ a clinical services director to oversee all forensic, clinical, and competency restoration services provided to transferred persons;

(5) implement staff qualifications, licensure, training, and supervision requirements that are sufficient to ensure that persons transferred to the forensic facility have access to clinically appropriate care, treatment, services, and supports consistent with individual needs and with applicable professional standards;

(6) ensure that a registered nurse licensed pursuant to 26 V.S.A. chapter 28 or a physician licensed pursuant to 26 V.S.A. chapter 23 or 33 is available to provide care to transferred persons 24 hours a day, seven days a week; and

(7) ensure that persons receive clinically appropriate assessment and treatment planning, including the development of an initial person-specific treatment plan within 72 hours following transfer, which shall be reviewed periodically as clinically indicated.

(c) Any records related to a person placed at the forensic facility shall be exempt from public inspection and copying under the Public Records Act and shall be kept confidential, except that:

(1) the records shall be made available to the parties in the underlying criminal case upon request; and

(2) the person's health care providers may, with the person's permission, view forensic facility records of the person's psychiatric assessments at the facility, including assessments of the person's competency to stand trial and criminal responsibility.

(d) Persons shall be admitted to and maintained at the forensic facility pursuant to sections 4815a and 4819a of this title, and in proceedings under those sections shall be entitled to have counsel appointed from Vermont Legal Aid to represent them.

(e) The Commissioner of Corrections shall regularly consult with the Commissioner of Mental Health when performing the duties required by this chapter for operating the forensic facility.

(f) The Commissioner shall adopt rules pursuant to 3 V.S.A. chapter 25 to implement this section.

Sec. 4a. 13 V.S.A. § 4826 is amended to read:

§ 4826. FORENSIC FACILITY; DEFINITIONS

* * *

(g) Annually, on or before January 15, the Department of Corrections, in consultation with the Departments of Health, of Mental Health, and of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living, shall submit a written report to the House Committees on Corrections and Institutions, on Human Services, and on Judiciary and to the Senate Committees on Institutions, on Health and Welfare, and on Judiciary addressing:

(1) the number of persons served at the forensic facility during the previous calendar year; and

(2) the types of clinical services and treatment provided during the previous calendar year.

~~Sec. 4. RULEMAKING; FORENSIC FACILITY~~

~~Pending the adoption of permanent rules pursuant to 3 V.S.A. chapter 25 to implement the provisions of Secs. 1-4 of this act, the Commissioner of Corrections shall adopt emergency rules pursuant to 3 V.S.A. § 844 on or before January 1, 2027, which shall be deemed to meet the emergency rulemaking standard in 3 V.S.A. § 844(c).~~

Sec. 5. RULEMAKING; FORENSIC FACILITY

The Commissioner of Corrections, in consultation with the Departments of Health, of Mental Health, and of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living, shall adopt rules pursuant to 3 V.S.A. chapter 25 to implement the provisions of Secs. 1, 3, and 4 of this act. Specifically, the rules shall establish:

(1) clinically appropriate standards governing the provision of services at the forensic facility, including requirements related to staffing patterns and

ratios; staff qualifications; licensure and training; clinical supervision; and the delivery of safe, effective, evidence-informed care;

(2) standards for quality assurance and improvement; clinical oversight; documentation and reporting requirements; safety and risk management protocols; and mechanisms for monitoring compliance; and

(3) any other provisions necessary to ensure safe, effective, and clinically appropriate implementation of Secs. 1, 3, and 4 of this act, including potentially requiring the provision of forensic facility services in a unit that is separate from other correctional populations.

Sec. 6. Rule 1101 of the Vermont Rules of Evidence is amended to read:

RULE 1101. APPLICABILITY OF RULES

(a) Rules applicable. Except as otherwise provided in subdivision (b), these rules apply to all actions and proceedings in the courts of this state.

(b) Rules inapplicable. The rules other than those with respect to privileges do not apply in the following situations:

* * *

(3) Miscellaneous Proceedings. Proceedings for extradition or rendition; inquest proceedings; except as otherwise provided by statute or rule promulgated by the Supreme Court, sentencing or granting or revoking probation; proceedings concerning competency restoration; granting or revoking conditional release from a forensic facility; finding probable cause for arrests without warrant and issuance of citations, warrants for arrest, criminal summonses, and search warrants.

* * *

~~Sec. 7. EFFECTIVE DATE~~

~~This act shall take effect on July 1, 2026.~~

Sec. 7. INTERIM REPORT; FORENSIC FACILITY

On or before October 1, 2026, the Department of Corrections, in collaboration with the Departments of Health, of Mental Health, and of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living, shall submit a written interim report to the House Committees on Corrections and Institutions, on Human Services, and on Judiciary and to the Senate Committees on Institutions, on Health and Welfare, and on Judiciary containing draft rules required pursuant to Sec. 5 of this act. The interim report shall also address:

(1) the status of and anticipated timeline for the adoption of rules under this act;

(2) forensic facility planning, including the specific proposed location of the forensic facility, space considerations and design elements necessary to support the provision of therapeutic services and security at the proposed location, and the timeline for any necessary fit-up of the forensic facility;

(3) initial staffing considerations, including anticipated staffing levels, required qualifications, and potential contracting needs; and

(4) an anticipated timeline for the development of a forensic facility, including preliminary cost estimates and initial operations.

Sec. 8. EFFECTIVE DATES

(a) This section, Sec. 2 (13 V.S.A. § 4817), Sec. 5 (rulemaking; forensic facility), and Sec. 7 (interim report; forensic facility) shall take effect on July 1, 2026.

(b) Sec. 4a (13 V.S.A. § 4826) shall take effect on July 1, 2029.

(c) All remaining sections shall take effect on January 1, 2028.