

Committee Approval with Conditions for B.1100(i) Appropriation to the Department of Corrections

The Committee acknowledges the need for expanded substance use disorder (SUD) and medication for opioid use disorder (MOUD) treatment services within the Department of Corrections and recognizes the Governor's proposal to transition the NECC facility into a treatment-focused facility for incarcerated Vermonters. In approving the recommended \$300,000 General Fund appropriation for this purpose, the Committee includes the following conditions:

1. **Cost Comparison Requirement:** The Department of Corrections shall provide a cost comparison of similar intensive treatment services offered to non-incarcerated Vermonters in community settings. This comparison will serve as a baseline for evaluating the projected costs and effectiveness of the proposed facility transition.
2. **Clarification of Fund Allocation:** The Committee requests a detailed breakdown of how the \$300,000 will be spent. Testimony from the Commissioner indicated that approximately \$200,000 would be allocated to a consultant to develop an implementation plan, with the remaining funds potentially directed toward early-phase implementation. Given this breakdown, the Committee requests further justification for the full \$300,000 appropriation rather than an initial \$200,000 allocation pending further review.
3. **Legislative Approval of Implementation:** The Committee asserts that the Legislature should retain final approval before any implementation of the proposed facility transition. To facilitate this, the Department of Corrections shall submit a report back on the consultant's findings and recommendations no later than **December 15, 2025**. This report shall include:
 - A detailed transition plan,
 - Expected outcomes and measures of success,
 - An assessment of how this initiative aligns with best practices for in-residence treatment programs,
 - Input from current DOC medical providers, including an analysis of how the developed program would impact the existing contract with WellPath.
4. **Legislative Review of the RFP Process:** The Committee shall review and approve any resulting Request for Proposals (RFP) for the consultant, ensuring that the scope of the request is clearly defined and that the deliverables align with legislative expectations before the RFP is issued.

By including these conditions, the Committee aims to ensure that the proposed facility transition is guided by best practices, cost-effectiveness, and transparency in implementation while maintaining appropriate legislative oversight.