

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND



Department of Corrections

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The Honorable Robert E. Craven Sr.
House Committee on Judiciary
82 Smith Street
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

March 5, 2024

Re: H7451 – Relating to State Affairs and Government -- Corrections Department

Dear Chairperson Craven:

This evening the House Judiciary Committee will consider House Bill #7451. This bill would establish a program within the Adult Correctional Institutions (ACI) to permit medication assisted treatment (MAT) approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for the treatment of a substance use disorder to any individual incarcerated and require that each inmate would be screened for substance use disorder within 24 hours of incarceration and if determined to be suffering from a substance use disorder shall be offered placement in the MAT program. The Rhode Island Department of Corrections (RIDOC) supports the codification of its MAT program.

Upon further review of this bill, it appears there is an inadvertent omission of Probation Officers on line 17 of page two. RIDOC recommends amending this line to read “probation and parole officers” to ensure all officers are provided accurate information regarding an individual’s use of medication for the purpose of treatment for opioid use disorder. The exclusion of probation officers would unintentionally not afford individuals on probation the same information sharing requirement as those on parole.

The Department’s MAT program offers incarcerated individuals with access to medication and therapy before and after being released from prison, through CODAC Behavioral Healthcare. We remain proud to be the first correctional system in the country to implement such a program, one that continues to demonstrate great success. Our dedicated staff carefully considers and thoughtfully recommends admission to the program. With the many variables considered when evaluating such individuals, enrollment in the MAT program remains a clinical decision made by RIDOC healthcare staff or its contracted providers.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Wayne T. Salisbury Jr.", written over a faint blue circular stamp.

Wayne T. Salisbury Jr.
Acting Director

cc: Honorable Members of the House Judiciary Committee
The Honorable Representatives Solomon, Stewart, Slater, Giraldo, Voas, Potter, Handy, and Casey