

City of Philadelphia

City Council
Chief Clerk's Office
402 City Hall
Philadelphia, PA 19107

Legislation Text

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Authorizing City Council's Committees on Public Health & Human Services and Public Safety to hold a joint committee hearing to continue monitoring and investigating the quality level of medical and mental health care services that is provided or made accessible to prison inmates under the care of the Philadelphia Prison System, and further authorizing the Committee to issue subpoenas and such other process as may be appropriate to compel the attendance of witnesses and the production of documents in furtherance of the investigation to the full extent authorized by Section 2-401 of the Home Rule Charter.

WHEREAS, The City of Philadelphia is responsible for providing all necessary inpatient and outpatient medical and mental health services to inmates, or prisoners of the City's Correctional, Youth Detention and Police Facilities; and

WHEREAS, The City of Philadelphia must provide these services in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Consent Decree entered by the Court in Jackson v. Hendrick of August 4, 1988, as revised by the Amended Agreement of Settlement of September 6, 1991 and Harris v. City of Philadelphia (CA No. 82-1847, USDC, EDPA); and

WHEREAS, Pursuant to the 1991 Consent Decree, the City was required to implement nineteen (19) Mental Health Care policies, and a Special Master was appointed and required to monitor the compliance of the Philadelphia Prison System (PPS) with those policies; and

WHEREAS, A January 27, 2000 status report describing the City's progress with respect to the degree of compliance with nineteen (19) required mental health care policies showed that sixteen (16) were "not in substantial compliance" according to the Special Master. Among the many findings, the Special Master noted that there was an unacceptable rate of missed medications and inadequate counseling as well as a finding that inmates identified as suicidal did not receive the necessary observation and monitoring required during suicide watch; and

WHEREAS, The City of Philadelphia has been facing lawsuits associated with prison inmate suicides and inadequate health care and monitoring, particularly as it relates to the treatment of diabetics; and

WHEREAS, On September 16, 2000 prison inmate Jose Santiago was found dead in his cell and prison officials reported the apparent cause was related to diabetes. According to news reports, the family of Mr. Santiago allege that while housed at the Northeast Philadelphia complex Jose Santiago did not receive the insulin shots he needed to remain alive; and

WHEREAS, The deaths of Gregory Eugene Quarles, Peter Diaz and Timothy Vines occurred over the last two years and raise serious questions about the quality of psychiatric care rendered by the health provider under contract to the Philadelphia Prison System; and

WHEREAS, There have been lawsuits filed by other former inmates suffering from diabetes who allege the City was negligent in treating and monitoring their medical condition; now therefore

RESOLVED, THAT THE CITY COUNCIL OF PHILADELPHIA, Authorizes City Council's Committees on Public Health & Human Services and Public Safety to hold a joint committee hearing to investigate the quality level of medical and mental health care services provided or made accessible to prison inmates under the care of the Philadelphia Prison System, and further authorizes the Committee to issue subpoenas and such other process as may be appropriate to compel the attendance of witnesses and the production of documents in furtherance of the investigation to the full extent authorized by Section 2-401 of the Home Rule Charter.