# Massachusetts State Prison System Transitions Medical Care Providers Amid Controversy



Massachusetts' state prison system is undergoing a significant change in medical care providers. Wellpath, the current contractor responsible for health care in ten state facilities, is set to depart on July 1. Wellpath is a venture capital-owned for-profit provider that has faced numerous lawsuits and scrutiny for substandard care, prompting intervention from state senators and the Department of Justice.

VitalCore, another for-profit firm established in 2018, will take over health care services for approximately 6,000 prisoners. Despite promising a range of services, including telehealth and a patient portal, VitalCore has also been subjected to legal actions in its short history.

Public Safety Secretary Terrence Reidy affirmed that this new partnership aligns with a commitment to holistic care. The contract with VitalCore is valued at $770 million over five years, which underscores the significant financial investment being made.

Monitoring and oversight responsibilities will fall to the Massachusetts Department of Correction (DOC), which will conduct frequent audits to ensure compliance. Additionally, the Justice Department's appointed monitor, Dr. Reena Kapoor, will continue to provide bi-annual reports on mental health care within the system.

Despite hopes for improvement with VitalCore, the Disability Law Center and other watchdogs remain skeptical, particularly as Wellpath continues to provide services at Bridgewater State Hospital until 2026 under a separate contract. Senator Elizabeth Warren and other officials have expressed their intent to closely monitor the new provider to ensure accountability and improved care standards.