

Testimony on SB 504
To
Senate Ways and Means

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Interim Secretary
Kansas Department of Corrections
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The Department of Corrections is a proponent of SB 504 which establishes a parole and community corrections nursing home task force for purposes of housing the aging and frail population of the department of corrections.

Every year there are offenders released to the community who need the level of care provided by a nursing home, due to mental or physical infirmities, or both, who are not able to access a nursing home. Some offenders are granted a release to an approved plan by the Prisoner Review Board, and it is challenging to find an acceptable plan because those offenders also need a nursing home level of care which is unavailable. Some offenders come to prison on a probation revocation through community corrections also needing a level of care provided by a nursing home, and the lack of it contributed to the revocation. There are inmates in our infirmaries who need a nursing home level of care, who could be released due to functional incapacity if a nursing home were available.

KDOC release and discharge planners frequently contact nursing homes. Placements are very difficult, because of the vulnerable populations served in nursing homes, because of staff uncertainty in dealing with the felony population, and because some of these offenders cannot get Medicaid established pre-release. Because of these barriers, these releasing offenders who need a nursing home usually are unable to access that level of care, and either stay in or return to prison.

For these reasons, we support SB504 which forms a task force to explore how to establish a nursing home for offenders, whether in incarceration or parole status, with particular focus on ways to access Medicare, Medicaid or other health insurance. There are partners in the community who would be interested in assisting the task force in looking at this issue, at the state and local levels and we look forward to continue discussions on this.