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PREpare for PARole and REentry

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HB0565 - Maryland Deaths In Custody Board - SUPPORT

We don't know what we don't know, and that is why I urge a favorable report on HB0565. Deaths in custody are something Maryland should be paying attention to, both for humanitarian and financial reasons. A primary one is the "Texas Two-Step" bankruptcy scheme deployed by Maryland health contractor Corizon, which is now Yes Care.¹ As Corizon collapsed, stories of medical neglect involving debilitating and fatal illnesses emerged, and in some cases the States that hired them may be forced to pay.

Corizon was the target of so many successful lawsuits and the guarantor of so many unpaid bills that it split into two companies, Corizon and Yes Care, leaving the bad debt on the Corizon side before declaring bankruptcy. While the Federal court system continues to sift through the legality of this action, Maryland continues to utilize Yes Care services to the peril of every incarcerated individual in the state.

But incarcerated individuals are not the only people suffering from Corizon/Yes Care's bad dealings. There are \$88 million of unpaid invoices, and the Arizona Department of Correction has spent over \$2 million defending itself from lawsuits on charges that Corizon should have handled, however because Corizon is a contractor for the State, the State is ultimately responsible and can be targeted by the civil suit as well. That means the State could very well end up paying Corizon and then ultimately paying the bills Corizon left unpaid, forcing the taxpayers to double pay each bill. There are also 44 employee lawsuits that include allegations of discrimination, wage theft, and wrongful termination. Corizon/Yes Care, like so many other private prison healthcare providers, has proven to be bad for everyone.

It is both unsafe and irresponsible to leave vulnerable lives like those of incarcerated individuals in the hands of a company like Corizon/Yes Care that has proven itself untrustworthy. Maryland should learn from Arizona's costly mistake and ensure proper oversight of its contractors immediately. HB0565 will make this happen, protecting individual lives and Maryland's financial future.

¹ Nicole Einbinder and Dakin Campbell, Hidden investors took over Corizon Health, a leading prison healthcare company. Then they deployed the Texas Two-Step., Business Insider, August 21, 2023, <https://www.businessinsider.com/corizon-health-bankruptcy-yescare-texas-two-step-law-2023-8?op=1>

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