



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
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For Immediate Release
February 25, 2015

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Statement of Middlesex Sheriff Peter J. Koutoujian
Regarding State Auditor's Report on Inmates and Health Care Coverage

I want to applaud State Auditor Suzanne Bump for the report released today regarding healthcare costs for incarcerated individuals.

As the former Chairman of the Legislature's Joint Committees on Public Health and Healthcare, I quickly realized the costly challenges associated with providing healthcare to those in our custody after arriving at the Middlesex Sheriff's Office. Since then, I have focused on identifying new ways, including the savings highlighted in today's report, to save critical taxpayers dollars.

In addition to the Auditor's findings, there are new avenues through the Affordable Care Act to realize more costs savings while ensuring that this underserved population – who oftentimes are most in need of care – receive timely access to healthcare.

While Auditor Bump's work concentrated on the important cost saving measures associated with this report, there are also equally important public health and safety implications to be realized by ensuring that those who encounter the criminal justice system receive health care coverage. It is critical that these individuals are given the necessary tools to address their mental health and substance abuse issues that often lead to incarceration. As studies show, those who have health care coverage upon release have lower rates of reoffending, thereby increasing public safety.

Moving forward on these fronts is a win for public safety, public health and for the Commonwealth's fiscal health. I look forward to working with MassHealth and our Legislative partners to realize these many benefits.

To read Auditor Bump's press release, please follow this link <http://goo.gl/X5kizR>.

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