South Carolina Prison Docs Agree Inmates Don’t Get Proper Hepatitis C Care

This is big news in a federal lawsuit brought by three inmates against the state’s department of corrections.

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Two doctors employed by the South Carolina Department of Corrections (SCDC) have gone on record as agreeing with inmates who claim that the state’s prison system is failing to deliver adequate hepatitis C virus (HCV) care and treatment. This is big news in a federal lawsuit brought by three inmates against the state’s prison system earlier this year, The State reports.

The doctors’ statements are now included in sworn affidavits in the class-action lawsuit. Infectious disease doctor James Grubbs, who has worked in South Carolina prisons since 2016 and was the first to join the fight for expanded access to care, stated, “It is my opinion, within a reasonable degree of medical certainty, that SCDC’s policies and practices regarding hepatitis C testing deviate from the standard of care.”

Another prison physician, Ansal Shah, seconded his opinion. Both were originally listed as defendants in the lawsuit, but lawyers for the inmates are now asking that the doctors be dropped from the case.

If successful, the lawsuit could force South Carolina to spend tens of millions of dollars on hepatitis C testing and treatment. Current estimates suggest approximately one third of South Carolina’s 19,000 state inmates—or 6,000 people—are likely in need of care. HCV-positive inmates have won similar lawsuits in Florida and Missouri.

To learn more about hepatitis C in prisons, click here.

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