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### **State Fines Prison Health Care Companies Millions**

The state fired the private company in charge of prisoner health care and gave the contract to another company after a 2016 investigation into dangerously bad medical care in prisons by the Santa Fe New Mexican. But in the two years since the change, millions of dollars in fines have been leveled against the new private health care provider. The state's Department of Corrections has fined Centurion—the new private corporation it hired—\$2.1 million for staffing shortages since 2016. Attorneys who represent inmates told lawmakers last month of an incarcerated man who slipped in the hallway, broke his arm, and spent more than a week with it bent like a question mark. Local civil rights lawyer Matthew Coyte said there's a human cost and a financial cost to taxpayers. "They are in prison. They have no control over if they can go to an emergency room, for example," he said. "And if the system is understaffed or underfunded—or dysfunctional in some way, then the inmates suffer." Another new for-profit company, MHM, that was contracted to provide behavioral health care, was also fined almost half a million dollars for not adequately staffing state prisons. New Mexico's prisons held more than 7,000 people last month.