

DCT 2026 Legislative Fast Facts

Authorization for DCT to use Security Body Scanners

Issue Summary

Direct Care and Treatment (DCT) staff perform contraband searches at secure facilities when there is suspicion or high risk of contraband entering the facility. In some cases, patients and clients must submit to unclothed visual body searches, which are intrusive for patients, clients, and staff. Current statute only permits state agencies to operate security body scanners if employees are licensed medical or scientific professionals, a requirement that DCT security staff do not meet. This prevents DCT from using less intrusive screening technology widely available and safely in use in correctional settings.

Proposal

This proposal amends Minnesota Statutes section 144.121 to extend the existing exemption for correctional and detention facilities to include secure treatment facilities operated by DCT. The change would allow DCT security employees to operate security body scanners without meeting statutory examination and inspection requirements that apply to medical professionals using x-ray machines that are more technical and powerful than security body scanners. The scanners would be used sparingly when there is suspected contraband, not for routine searches. In developing this proposal, DCT has consulted with other state agencies on key operational and safety issues as well as the suggested statutory language.

Why It's Important

This change would reduce reliance on intrusive, unclothed visual searches at facilities such as the Minnesota Sex Offender Program (MSOP) and Forensic Services, improving dignity for patients and clients while maintaining facility security. Body scanners provide a more consistent and thorough screening method that reduces physical contact and potential trauma. The proposal aligns DCT's secure treatment facilities with the same security standards already used in correctional facilities, improving safety for both staff and the individuals served.