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California Prison Health Care Receiver Preparing Request To Seize Funds

On Tuesday, the court appointed receiver for California's prison health care system said he has begun working on a request for a court order that would direct California officials to give him the funds he needs to begin construction of prison medical facilities, the *Los Angeles Times* reports.

Last month, the Senate rejected receiver J. Clark Kelso's proposal to issue \$7 billion in bonds to fund construction of the facilities (Rothfeld, *Los Angeles Times*, 6/18).

Kelso then asked Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger (R) to bypass the Legislature and execute a contract with Kelso for the new medical centers. Kelso maintains that Schwarzenegger has that authority under a prison overcrowding emergency he declared in October 2006.

Kelso has a court order to bring the level of prison health care to constitutional standards (*California Healthline*, 6/10).

Hallye Jordan, a spokesperson for Controller John Chiang (D), said, "Even if there was a court order, it would be problematic because the fact is today there is no cash in the general fund."

If Kelso gets the court order requiring the state to allocate money from the general fund, Jordan said the money likely would have to be shifted from payments to schools or health care providers, or from voter-approved initiatives (*Los Angeles Times*, 6/18).

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