



## **NORTON INTRODUCES BILL TO PROHIBIT BOP FROM CHARGING COPAYS FOR HEALTH CARE VISITS**

June 29, 2026 [Press Release](#)

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** — Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC) introduced a bill today to prohibit the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) from charging individuals in its custody copays for health care visits. People serving sentences for D.C. Code felonies are in BOP custody.

"People incarcerated in BOP facilities need to be empowered to address health concerns early, rather than waiting until problems become severe. Catching issues before they escalate is not only more medically sound, it also spares the federal government significant costs, which ultimately benefits taxpayers," Norton said. "We want people leaving prison to be stable, productive members of their communities, and that outcome is impossible if we've neglected their physical and mental health while they were incarcerated. [Placing financial barriers between inmates and the medical attention they need works directly against the mission of rehabilitation.](#)"

BOP inmates are currently required to pay a fee of \$2.00 per health care visit. Inmates earn only \$0.12 to \$0.40 per hour from work assignments.

Norton's introductory statement follows.

### **[Statement of Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton on the Introduction of the Fairness in Federal Bureau of Prisons Medical Care Act of 2026](#)**

Today, I introduce the [Fairness in Federal Bureau of Prisons Medical Care Act of 2026](#). This bill would eliminate the copay the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) imposes on individuals in its custody when they visit a health care provider.

Under BOP rules, individuals in its custody are required to "pay a fee for health services of \$2.00 per health care visit." While \$2 may seem insignificant, individuals in BOP custody earn only twelve to forty cents per hour on their work assignments. Moreover, while copays can reduce unnecessary visits, we should be encouraging individuals in BOP custody to seek medical care before their conditions worsen and become more expensive for taxpayers. Preventive and early care are better for patients and taxpayers than costly treatments.

Under BOP rules, if an individual in BOP custody is found responsible through the disciplinary hearing process of having caused an injury to another person in BOP custody that required a visit to a health care provider, the offending individual is required to pay the \$2 copay for the injured individual's visit. That rule would not change under this bill.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.