New York State Wants HIV-Positive Prisoner Held After Serving Time

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Nushawn Williams, an HIV-positive Brooklyn man, recently completed a 12-year prison sentence for statutory rape and reckless endangerment for transmitting HIV to at least 13 women. But New York State wants to keep him locked up indefinitely under a civil law meant to keep dangerous criminals off the street even after they've served time, The Associated Press reports.

Under the 3-year-old civil statute, the state must prove Williams has mental abnormalities and is likely to offend again. If sentenced, Williams will be held at a medium security psychiatric facility, with his case reviewed yearly.

A May 6 hearing will decide whether Williams should remain in jail until a trial can determine his mental health status.

Daniel Grasso, William's lawyer, said the court has to weigh his client's needs and the societal risk of his release in determining an indefinite prison sentence.

In a March interview, Williams told state Office of Mental Health psychologist Jacob Hadden, PhD, that he did not intend to transmit HIV to his partners.

"I was not trying to give them the highly infectious disease," Williams said. "I was selling drugs and moving too fast. If I used protection, I wouldn't have it, either."

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