

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS



Standard Operating Procedures

Policy Name: Transitional Center Health Services

Policy Number: 507.04.02

Effective Date: 8/22/2023

Page Number: 1 of 9

Authority:
Commissioner

Originating Division:
Health Services Division
(Physical Health)

Access Listing:
Level I: All Access

I. Introduction and Summary:

The objective of an offender being assigned to a transitional center is to prepare for re-entry into the community to include self-management of physical, mental, and dental health. Offenders assigned to a transitional center remain in the custody of the Georgia Department of Corrections (GDC) and, as such, GDC is ultimately responsible for health services. Access to health services will be provided to offenders assigned to transitional centers. Offenders seeking service will be responsible for the costs of selected health services in accordance with their work-status and ability to pay. This procedure is applicable to all Transitional Centers.

II. Authority:

A. GDC Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs): 215.21 Transitional Center Financial Operations, 507.02.01 Health Records Management, Format, and Contents, 507.02.02 Confidentiality of the Health Records and Release of Information, 507.04.04 Patient Tracking Systems, 507.04.05 Charges to Offender Accounts for Health Care Provided, 507.04.10 Consultations and Procedures, 507.04.12 Telemedicine, 507.04.16 Utilization Management, 507.04.18 Discharge Planning, 507.04.20 Orientation of Offenders for Access to Health Services, 507.04.22 Optical Services, 507.04.25 Health Screening-Offender Transfers, 507.04.27 Sick Call, 507.04.28 Chronic Care, 507.04.36 Periodic Physical Examinations, 507.04.37 Urgent and Emergent Care Services, 507.04.42 Infirmary Care, 507.04.43 Medication Distribution System, 507.04.44 Medication Administration Record, 507.04.46 Medication Errors, 507.05.03 Guidelines for Dental Treatment, 508.34 Clearance for Transitional Programs; and

B. ACA Standards: 4-ACRS-4C-01, 4-ACRS-4C-02, 4-ACRS-4C-03 (Mandatory), 4-ACRS-4C-06 (Mandatory), and 4-ACRS-4C-15.

III. Definitions: None.

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IV. Statement of Policy and Applicable Procedures:

A. Health Services for Offenders of Transitional Centers Not Participating in the Work Release Program:

1. Offenders assigned to long-term maintenance and those who are not yet participating in the work-release component of the program are responsible for the costs of health services the same as any other offender in a state prison would be. Health services will be provided as follows:
 - a. Offenders not participating in the work release program will be responsible for medical co-pays in accordance with SOP 507.04.05 Charges to Offender Accounts for Health Care Provided.
 - b. Intra-system Transfer Review: Intra-system transfer review will be conducted by a licensed health care provider in accordance with SOP 507.04.25 Health Screening - Offender Transfers. All routine physicals and chronic illness clinic visits that are due within three (3) months of arrival at the center should be scheduled and completed within thirty (30) days of arrival.
 - c. Sick Call requests will be picked up and triaged by the nurse Monday through Friday (except on state holidays). A licensed health care provider will conduct sick call on-site at least three (3) days per week.
 - d. Consultation with a clinician may be provided through on-site, regional catchment, telemedicine, or local community services in accordance with SOP 507.04.10 Consultations and Procedures. Appointments with a clinician will be made available on-site a minimum of once weekly. The contract vendor is responsible for the costs of all contracted medical services.
 - e. Chronic Illness Clinics will be provided through on-site or regional catchment in accordance with SOP 507.04.28 Chronic Care.

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- f. Urgent/Emergent Care will be provided initially on-site by licensed health care or correctional personnel in accordance with SOP 507.04.37 Urgent and Emergent Care Services. If further care is needed, the on-call physician will be notified to provide guidance. Subsequent care may be accessed through local emergency services or transfer to the applicable catchment facility. Emergency Services discharge paperwork will be reviewed by medical staff upon offender's return to the facility, and the on-call clinician will be contacted with any recommendations by the outside provider, as necessary.
- g. Medication will be provided by the contract vendor pharmacy or a local pharmacy in accordance with SOP 507.04.43 Medication Distribution System. A co-pay is applicable for co-pay eligible medications. Offenders may self-administer medications except psychotropics, INH and controlled substances. Offenders with a history of non-adherence may also be required to adhere to direct observation medication administration. Blister packing of medications is not required. Offenders are required to complete a Health Service Request Form for refills of all self-administered medications.
- h. Consultation Services may be accessed through ASMP or locally in accordance with Utilization Management procedures. The consultation process will be implemented in accordance with SOP 507.04.10 Consultations and Procedures.
- i. Infirmary/Inpatient Care/Hospitalization Services will be accessed through the regional infirmary or local hospital through the Utilization Management process in accordance with 507.04.16 Utilization Management, SOP 507.04.12 Telemedicine, and SOP 507.04.42 Infirmary Care.

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- j. Periodic Physicals and Tuberculosis Screening will be obtained through on-site services in accordance with SOP 507.04.36, Periodic Physical Examinations.
- k. Dental Services will be obtained through regional catchment in accordance with SOP 507.05.03 Guidelines for Dental Treatment.
- l. Optometry Services will be obtained through regional catchment in accordance with SOP 507.04.22 Optical Services.
- m. Mental health services will be accessed through the assigned GDC Mental Health Program in accordance with SOP 508.34 Clearance for Transitional Centers.
- n. Discharge Planning Services: Nursing personnel in conjunction with counseling staff will coordinate arrangements for discharge planning for offenders with chronic and infectious diseases, or those requiring mental health services, family planning and any other necessary health services in accordance with SOP 507.04.18 Discharge Planning.
- o. Administrative Clinic Duties/Appointment Scheduling: Nursing personnel will schedule all health-related appointments. Tracking logs will be maintained in accordance with SOP 507.04.04 Patient Tracking Systems..
- p. Health Records: Transitional Centers will maintain and retain health records in accordance with SOP 507.02.01 Health Records Management, Format, and Contents, SOP 507.02.02 Confidentiality of the Health Records and Release of Information, and other pertinent departmental standard operating procedures.

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B. Health Services for Offenders **in the Work-Release Program** at Transitional Centers:

1. Offenders who are in the work-release component of the transitional center program will be responsible for costs of selected health services. Once an offender achieves work-release status, a Transition to Community Health Care Form will be completed, signed, and filed in the progress notes section of the health record. Offenders are encouraged to enroll in employer insurance programs to offset the cost of out-of-pocket medical expenses. Payment of outside services will be made in accordance with SOP 215.21, Transitional Center Transitional Center Financial Operations. On-site and community clinical encounters may be coordinated by the medical staff and documented in the medical record. Health services will be provided as follows:
 - a. Intra-system Transfer Review: The intra-system transfer review will be conducted by a licensed health care provider in accordance to SOP 507.04.25, Health Screening-Offender Transfers. All routine physicals and chronic illness clinic visits that are due within 90 days of arrival at the center should be scheduled and completed within 30 days of arrival.
 - b. Sick Call requests will be picked up and triaged by the nurse Monday through Friday (except on state holidays). A licensed health care provider will conduct sick call on-site at least three (3) days per week. For offenders who cannot obtain an appointment in the community in a medically acceptable timeframe, a Health Services Request Form may be submitted for on-site care. A \$10.00 co-pay is applicable to all sick call encounters involving an assessment.
 - c. Clinician consultation will be obtained through local community services in accordance with SOP 507.04.10 Consultations and Procedures. If an appointment for local services is not available within a medically acceptable timeframe, an appointment may be made for on-site care. On-site clinician services will be available a minimum of once weekly. A

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\$10.00 co-pay is applicable. The offender is responsible for the costs of off-site care in accordance to SOP 215.21 Transitional Center Financial Operations.

- d. Chronic Care Services will be coordinated by medical staff through referral to local community services in accordance with SOP 507.04.28 Chronic Care. The outside clinician will manage the offender's health care needs through regularly scheduled clinic visits. It is the offender's responsibility to follow up with these appointments, to abide by the outside clinician's instructions, recommendations and to obtain and take medications as directed. Failure to comply with any of the above-mentioned responsibilities will result in offender return to state prison. If the offender has difficulty in obtaining medically necessary care, the medical staff will be responsible for health care delivery. If chronic care services are provided on-site, \$10.00 co-pay is applicable.
- e. Licensed health care or correctional personnel will provide Urgent/Emergent Care initially on-site in accordance with SOP 507.04.37 Urgent and Emergent Care Services. Subsequent care may be accessed through local emergency services. A \$10.00 co-pay will be applicable for all initial visits to licensed health care personnel. Payment of outside services will be made in accordance with SOP 215.21 Transitional Center Financial Operations. Discharge paperwork will be reviewed, and a follow-up appointment will be scheduled with an outside clinician as indicated.
- f. In accordance with SOP 507.04.05 Charges to Offender Accounts for Health Care Provided, medications will be provided at a \$5 co-pay for co-pay eligible medications to the offender only until such time the offender has funds to pay for the medication through a local community pharmacy. Once sufficient funds are available, as determined in consultation with the facility business manager, offenders will be responsible for paying for their medication from the local community pharmacy. When an offender fails to obtain prescribed medications, the offender will receive medication non-

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compliance counseling. Continued failure to comply will result in offender return to state prison. Prescribed medications will be obtained from the Pharmacy contract vendor until which time the offender is returned to state prison.

- g. Offenders may self-administer medications except psychotropics, INH and controlled substances. Blister packing of medications is not required. Nursing services will assist the offender by helping with the enrollment in public programs for medications.
 - 1) If the offender cannot afford his or her medications, the prescription(s) will be filled by the contract vendor Pharmacy. This option should be pursued after all other avenues have been exhausted. Otherwise, offenders are responsible for the costs of medications in accordance with SOP 215.21 Transitional Center Financial Operations.
 - 2) Insulin dependent diabetic offenders will be provided insulin and supplies that will be needed during off-site work hours. Insulin syringes will be signed out daily and given to the offender upon departure to work.
- h. Specialty Consultation Services will be accessed through ASMP or locally in accordance with SOP 507.04.16 Utilization Management. Nursing personnel should request confirmation from the facility business manager that the offender has sufficient funds to cover a local referral prior to approval. Otherwise, a referral for GDC resources will be made in accordance with Utilization Management procedures. The consultation process will be implemented in accordance with SOP 507.04.10 Consultations and Procedures. Offenders are responsible for the costs of outside services subject to SOP 215.21 Transitional Center Financial Operations. There is no co-pay applicable to ASMP consultations. Follow-up visits post consultations may be conducted by the offenders' community physician or by the facility clinician, as applicable.

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- i. Infirmary/Inpatient Care/Hospitalization Services will be accessed through the Utilization Management process. Co-pay is not applicable.
- j. Injuries/Illnesses in the workplace will depend on the circumstance. If such events occur in the outside workplace and if workers compensation or personal insurance is applicable this will be considered as primary coverage. If such injuries/illnesses occur on a work detail within the center, offenders will not be held financially responsible. Otherwise, offenders are responsible for costs of outside services subject to SOP 215.21 Transitional Center Financial Operations.
- k. Tuberculosis Screening will be obtained through on-site services in accordance with SOP 507.04.36 Periodic Physical Exams. Co-pay is not applicable.
- l. Routine physical exams will be scheduled with an outside clinician upon offender's request.
- m. Dental Services will be obtained through referral to local dentistry services in accordance with SOP 507.05.03 Guidelines for Dental Treatment. The offender is responsible for costs of dental services. If it becomes apparent that local dental services will exceed the offender's ability to pay, a referral will be made to GDC resources for necessary treatment.
- n. Optometry Services will be obtained by referral to local services in accordance with SOP 507.04.22 Optical Services. The offender is responsible for the costs of the examination and glasses. Prior to a referral, nursing personnel should request confirmation from the facility business manager that sufficient funds are available to cover the anticipated expense.
- o. Mental health services will be provided as outlined in SOP 508.34 Clearance for Transitional Centers. The offender is responsible for the

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costs of community mental health services in accordance with SOP 215.21 Transitional Center Financial Operations. Offenders requiring inpatient services Level IV or higher will need to be reevaluated for participation in the work release program.

- p. Discharge Planning Services: Nursing personnel will coordinate arrangements for discharge planning for chronic and infectious diseases, mental health services, family planning and any other necessary health services. Co-pay is not applicable.
- q. Administrative Clinic Duties/Appointment Scheduling: Nursing personnel in coordination with counseling and security staff will schedule health-related appointments or, if applicable, the offender can schedule their own outside appointments. Tracking logs will be maintained in accordance with SOP 507.04.04 Patient Tracking Systems.
- r. Health Records: Transitional Centers will maintain and retain health records in accordance with SOP 507.02.01 Health Records Management, Format, and Contents, SOP 507.02.02 Confidentiality of the Health Records and release of Information and other pertinent departmental standard operating procedures.

V. **Attachments:** None.

VI. **Record Retention of Forms Relevant to this Policy:** None.