

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS



Standard Operating Procedures

Policy Name: Receiving Screening

Policy Number: 507.04.19

Effective Date: 11/07/2023

Page Number: 1 of 6

Authority:
Commissioner

Originating Division:
Health Services Division
(Physical Health)

Access Listing:
Level I: All Access

I. Introduction and Summary:

After Georgia Department of Corrections (GDC) assumes custody and offenders arrive at the GDC receiving facility, offenders will be screened to identify urgent health needs requiring immediate evaluation and treatment. This procedure is applicable to all facilities that house GDC offenders including private and county prisons.

II. Authority:

A. Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. R.: 125-4-4-.05;

B. GDC Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs): 220.05 Diagnostic Reception, Orientation, and Processing, 220.09 Classification and Management of Transgender and Intersex Offenders, 508.14 Mental Health Reception Screen, 508.19 Mental Health Referral and Triage, 507.04.21 Health Assessment and Medical Diagnostics, and 508.15 Mental Health Evaluations;

C. NCCHC 2018 Adult Standard: P-E-02; and

D. ACA Standards: 5-ACI-6A-21 (Mandatory), 5-ACI-6A-24 and 5-ACI-6A-25 (Mandatory).

III. Definitions:

A. **Licensed Health Care Provider** - A physician, dentist, nurse practitioner, physician assistant, registered nurse, dental hygienist, clinical nurse specialist, or licensed practical nurse.

B. **Clinician** - A physician, nurse practitioner, physician assistant, mental health counselor, medical social worker, clinical psychologist and/or clinical nurse specialist.

C. **Health Screening** - A system of structured inquiry and observation designed to (1) identify any medical problems, (2) rapidly transport newly admitted offenders to needed health care and (3) prevent newly arrived offenders who pose a health

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or safety threat to themselves or others from being admitted to the general population.

- D. **Warden's Designee** - Any GDC employee designated by the Warden as the supervisor in-charge (e.g., Deputy Warden Care/ Treatment, or Duty Officer).
- E. **Trained Correctional Officer** - Correctional Officer (CO) who has completed Basic Correctional Officer Training (BCOT) and has been trained to complete the receiving screening form in the event nursing staff are not on duty.

IV. Statement of Policy and Applicable Procedures:

A. Receiving Screening:

1. Offenders entering GDC facilities will receive a Health Screening, as soon as possible, by a Licensed Health Care Provider, a medical/nursing assistant, or Trained Correctional Officer.
2. The Licensed Health Care Provider, trained medical/nursing assistant or Trained Correctional Officer should complete the receiving Health Screening by documenting the following information:
 - a. The names and dosages of all prescription and over the counter (OTC) drugs/medications or other substances currently being taken as stated by the offender. The form will indicate whether the medication arrived with the offender.
 - b. Allergies to medications or other substances.
 - c. Symptoms suggestive of tuberculosis (e.g., cough, night sweats, weight loss, etc.), COVID (fever or chills, cough, difficulty breathing, body aches, loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion, nausea/vomiting, or diarrhea, etc.), or other infectious disease.

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- d. Dental problems.
- e. Recent drug or alcohol use and the date last used;
- f. Evaluation of offenders for mental health disorder:
 - 1) While offenders may become suicidal at any point during incarceration, high-risk periods include the time immediately upon admission to a facility or following adjudication, when the offender is returned from court. Offenders presenting with signs or symptoms of suicidal behavior should be immediately referred to a mental health professional. If no mental health services are available at the intake facility, arrangements will be made to transfer the offender to an appropriate facility with mental health services. In this case, notify the Clinician and Warden's Designee for additional instructions.
 - 2) The referral will take place the same day the signs and symptoms are noted. The timing of the evaluation will be determined by the mental health provider but will occur no later than fourteen (14) days after admission.
- g. Chronic medical problems such as asthma, diabetes, seizures, hypertension, hepatitis, HIV infection, TB infection or disease, dialysis, etc., should be noted. The presence of any dental problems should also be recorded in this section.
- h. Screening includes a history of sexual abuse:
 - 1) Indicate whether there is a history of previous sexual victimization and if it occurred in an institution or community setting. If there is an indication of trauma related to sexual abuse, refer to Medical or Mental Health within fourteen (14) days of intake.

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- 2) Indicate whether this offender has previously perpetrated sexual abuse and if it occurred in an institution or community setting. Refer to Mental Health within fourteen (14) days of intake.
- 3) For women, inquire regarding pregnancy or any gynecological problems.
 - i. Mobility impairments, if present, should be listed along with any special equipment the offender needs. The presence of internal orthopedic hardware (screws, plates, rods, etc.) should be listed, especially if housing placement may be affected. Any durable medical equipment, prosthetics, etc. must also be indicated.
 - j. Unusual behavior which may suggest drug withdrawal, mental health disease or other illness requiring immediate attention (e.g., tremors, hallucinations, agitation, sweating, etc.) should be documented. An immediate referral to a medical provider for further evaluation should be made. Consult mental health, if indicated.
 - k. Note whether the offender has executed an Advance Directive such as a Living Will or Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care (DPAHC).
 - l. Previous medical records, which may be useful in evaluating and classifying the offender, should be requested. The name and address of the physician or clinic should be listed and the consent to release medical information should be signed by the offender.
 - m. Authorization for release of medical information to identified person(s) should be obtained according to HIPAA guidelines. Medical shall obtain informed consent from the offender before reporting any information.

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- n. The qualified health professional or Trained Correctional Officer should make one of the following dispositions, according to the specific identified need:
 - 1) Offenders with symptoms suggesting acute illness or urgent medical needs (e.g., chronic illness requiring medication, suspected tuberculosis, etc.) will be immediately referred to a Clinician. Offenders who present with signs of trauma and who indicate that they suffered this because of physical abuse by other offenders or staff will be reported to the Responsible Health Authority, who will refer to mental health.
 - 2) Offenders with life-threatening conditions (e.g., hemorrhage, respiratory distress, convulsions, etc.) should be transported via EMS to the nearest outside medical facility.
 - 3) Offenders presenting with signs or symptoms of suicidal behavior, mental health disorders, depression or evidence of self-mutilation will be immediately referred to a mental health provider.
 - 4) If the offender has no urgent health needs, the offender will be identified for routine processing and the Receiving Health Screening form forwarded to the Licensed Health Care Provider for evaluation within seven (7) days. The Clinician will acknowledge review of the screening.
- o. All offenders will have an intake diagnostic exam to include all system evaluations and anatomical genitalia;
- p. There is a section on the receiving Health Screening to document additional comments; and

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- q. The offender should sign and date the form in the designated area. In addition, the Licensed Health Care Provider or Trained Correctional Officer completing the form should sign and date the form.

B. Offenders Entering Non-Diagnostic Facilities:

1. Offenders who have been out to court or have had parole revoked will be screened upon arrival to any GDC facility. A brief health assessment will be conducted, and if necessary, the physical profile updated:
 - a. Offenders who have been out to court for less than 30 days should be screened using the Intra-System Transfer process upon return to the facility (Form P30-0001.01).
 - b. Offenders who have had parole/probation revoked should be screened upon arrival using the Receiving Health Screening Form and be sent to a diagnostic center for intake processing.

V. Attachments: None.

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