
Division of Institutions
Policy and Procedure

I. PURPOSE

To assist in the acquisition of care during imprisonment and after release.

II. POLICY

The health care delivery system will ensure that a patient is provided continuity of care, primarily through the maintenance of an appropriate health record, which accompanies the patient wherever he or she goes. Continuity of care also requires that a patient not miss medication doses because of movement through the system. Management of each individual's health care will be the responsibility of the primary care provider assigned to each prison facility. The primary care provider will use administrative guidelines and nursing resources provided by the North Carolina Department of Adult Correction (DAC), Division of Comprehensive Health Services.

III. PROCEDURES

A. Initial Entry into the System

1. When an offender enters the system, the initial health screening will be accomplished in accordance with policy S .0200, Intake Receiving Screening.
2. The health care provider at the diagnostic center may order previous medical records and any indicated testing to ensure adequate care of the offender.
3. When requesting medical records prior to incarceration from an outside facility the offender will sign a completed Authorization for Release of Medical information.
4. The offender's outpatient or electronic health record will contain relevant current and past medical history.

B. Transfers Within the System

1. Between Facilities
 - a) The facility warden will establish written procedures to ensure that an offender transferred between facilities has no health condition which precludes transfer.
 - b) All appropriate medications will accompany the transferring offender.

- c) The mode of transportation of a sick or injured offender will be determined by the senior health care provider onsite.
- d) If the offender has a health condition which requires medication in route, medications and instructions for treatment will be provided to the officer in charge of the vehicle if the offender is not allowed to self-medicate. All treatment instructions shall be prepared by the facility nurse currently caring for the patient.
- e) If an offender is transferred from one vehicle to another vehicle while in route to his new assignment, the officer in charge of the releasing vehicle will ensure that the health record (if no electronic healthcare record is available), medications, and appropriate instructions are provided to the officer in charge of the gaining vehicle. This same information will be immediately brought to the attention of the officer in charge of the new facility of assignment. It will be the responsibility of this officer in charge to ensure that appropriate medical personnel are advised of these same medical constraints.

2. Between Facilities and Inpatient Facilities

- a) Whenever a patient is transferred to an inpatient facility, the attending physician/designee will arrange for acceptance of the patient by the physician of the receiving inpatient facility. In the case of a mental health referral, a Notice of Referral to a Mental Health Facility DC-133R, will be completed and scanned into the outpatient health record prior to the offender being transferred.
- b) When a patient is discharged from the prison inpatient facility, the Discharge Medications and Instructions will be completed in the electronic medical record prior to discharge. A discharge summary will be completed by provider and entered into the electronic medical record within one week of discharge.

3. Transfers for Medical Appointments

- a) When medical appointments outside the assigned housing facility are necessary, the medical staff will inform the offender of the need for the appointment.
- b) Offender will not be informed of the specific date, time, and place of the appointment.

C. Discharge from the System

- 1. Whenever an offender with a chronic health condition is discharged from the system, the offender should be instructed to report to a medical provider within their home community.
- 2. Facility Nurse Manager or designee should identify medically needy or medically unstable offenders at least 90 days prior to the date of anticipated release.

3. Nursing staff at the facility will monitor the release list for the facility weekly using OPUS on the Web.
4. Nursing will refer releases for HIV positive clients to Outreach staff.
5. The nurse at the facility will complete the Referral for Medical Aftercare Planning (DC-524A) outlining the medical needs of identified offender patients.
6. Nursing staff and/or Social Worker are responsible for making medical provider appointments prior to release when possible.
7. The nurse will confirm with the Social Worker the city and state in which the offender will reside upon release.
8. The appointments will be documented for inclusion in the MH 42, 43, 44 Aftercare Plan in OPUS.
9. Completed referral form will be routed to the MH social worker responsible for that facility.
10. A copy of the referral form will be scanned into the electronic healthcare record.
11. Offenders receiving prescription medications will be given the unused portion of their filled prescriptions when they are released.
12. To assure continuity of care, facility providers may write prescriptions for 30 day supplies of medications.
13. Prescriptions will not be given for narcotics or PRN medications.

D. Release of Offender to Law Enforcement Agencies

1. It is the policy of the DAC to promote continuity of medical care when offenders are transferred from the prison system into the custody of other law enforcement agencies.
2. When offenders are scheduled for release into the custody of other law enforcement agencies, DAC staff should send a brief medical summary of the offender's condition and the balance of any prescription medications.
3. Procedures
 - a) When offenders are scheduled to be released to other law enforcement agencies, non-medical staff should notify the appropriate medical staff of the pending transfer as soon as possible.

- b) The medical staff will review the offender's health record and determine if the offender has any medical conditions that will require follow-up treatment by the other agency. Medical staff will complete a medical summary to be sent with the offender.
 - c) If the offender is on prescription medication, the medical staff will prepare the balance of the offender's current prescription to be sent with the offender. All medications will be sent in the original container. Staff should ensure a minimum seven-day supply of all current medications are sent with the offender; or less if that will complete the prescribed course of treatment.
4. Medication/Medical Summary Not Sent with the Offender – Occasionally offenders are picked up by law enforcement agencies without prior notice. In such cases, it is possible that a medical summary and medications may not be sent with the offender. As a result, the staff of the agency may call the medical staff at the facility from which the offender was released to obtain or verify medical information. In these situations, the prison medical staff should provide the appropriate information.
5. Release of Medical Information – It is permissible to release medical information via telephone to other law enforcement agency staff using of the following procedure:
- a) When contacted by law enforcement agency staff who are seeking medical information on a recently released offender, prison medical staff should:
 - i. Obtain the name of the agency;
 - ii. Obtain the name of the person calling;
 - iii. Obtain the telephone number of the agency; and
 - iv. Inform the person calling that you will review the health record to obtain the requested information and will then return their call.
 - b) Review the health record and obtain the requested information.
 - c) Verify that the telephone number is the number for the agency, and then return the call to the agency. Once confirmed, the requested information may be shared with the appropriate staff of the receiving agency.
6. Offender Released Without Prescribed Medication
- a) Prison medical staff should inform the law enforcement agency staff of the medications prescribed for the offender.

b) Offenders who are temporarily in the custody of the jail and who will be returning to the Division should be sent with a minimum of seven days of current medications.

7. Offenders Who Return from County Jails or Law Enforcement Agencies Without Medications

When offenders who are on prescription medications return from jail or other agencies without their prescribed medications, facility medical staff may use the starter dose packages or order enough medication from the local pharmacy to last until prescriptions can be refilled at Central Pharmacy.

IV. REFERENCES

5th Edition Standards for Adult Correctional Institutions

5-ACI-6A-04, 5-ACI-6A-24, 5-ACI-6D-06

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