

## **Operational guidelines for Medical Officers in correctional homes**

Correctional homes employ Medical Officers in different categories. There are

- Regular Medical Officers appointed by the Health & Family Welfare Department who are deputed to the correctional homes.
- Medical Officers appointed on full time contract by the Department of Jails or the Directorate of Prisons
- Medical Officers appointed on part-time contract by the Directorate of Prisons
- Medical Specialists associated with correctional homes on fees per visit basis.

Services of the Medical Officers deputed by the Health & Family Welfare Department are governed by the rules and regulations of the said Department subject to the provision that when employed in the correctional homes they have to abide by the terms and conditions of medical services set in the West Bengal Correctional Services Act, 1992 and the West Bengal Jail Code.

The following are the broad terms of service for the **Medical Officers on full time contract**:

1. All Medical Officers on contract shall have to perform duties in the correctional homes within the broad parameters set for the Medical Officers and Medical Subordinates in the Jail Code of the State.
2. Within the broad parameters of the Jail Code, the following shall be imperative upon the Medical Officers in the correctional homes:
  - a. Examination of the inmates on admission to ascertain their state of health, recording their history of illness and recommending appropriate treatment.
  - b. Daily visit to the Wards and Cells and general supervision over the health of the inmates.
  - c. Examination of the inmates, members of the staff and family members of the staff residing within the complex at the outdoor facilities.
  - d. Thorough examination of the inmates admitted in the hospital wards and treatment of the ailing hospitalized inmates.
  - e. General supervision over the drinking water facilities and ensuring appropriate cleanliness and disinfection in order to ensure that the health of the inmates and staff are not at risk due to contamination of water sources.
  - f. General supervision over the sanitation facilities, both inside wards and cells and outside and recommend measures to improve sanitation for health protection of the inmates and staff.
  - g. General supervision over the processing of food for consumption of the inmates and recommending measures to protect health of the inmates from any deficiency in food preparation.
  - h. In case of correctional homes having medical kitchen, the overall responsibility of supervision over the medical kitchen will lie on the Medical officer.

- i. In case of correctional homes where there is no medical kitchen, the Medical officer shall ensure that medical diet is provided to the persons requiring special diets from the medical point of view.
  - j. Examination of inmates before their transfer from one facility to another to ensure that any inmate not in position to shift due to health condition is not shifted.
  - k. Referring inmates to the Specialists attached to the correctional home for any kind of specialized treatment.
  - l. Referring inmates for specialized treatment at facilities outside the correctional home premises. Any reference to the outside facility will positively be authorized by the full time Medical Officer unless immediate referral is required as a life-saving measure. In the correctional homes where no full time Medical Officer is posted, part-time Medical Officers will authorize outside transfer. In the correctional home where neither a full time nor a part-time Medical Officer is in position, Medical Specialists/ Practitioners on call shall have the authority to refer an inmate to an outside hospital.
  - m. General supervision over the medical stores including medicines and medical equipments.
  - n. General supervision over maintenance and use of medical equipments available at the correctional home.
3. Any Medical Officer/ Specialist examining inmates/ staff/ family members of the staff shall record the symptoms, diagnosis and prescription in an appropriately devised prescription format. No medicine shall be issued to an inmate/ staff/ family member without recording of the above mentioned details. All such prescriptions shall be handed over to the patient treated and necessary entries shall be made in an appropriate register.
4. The Medical Officer on full time contract shall make himself available on call at any point of time. He will make himself available within the premises in two different shifts for a minimum period of six hours irrespective of the number of patients requiring medical attention. During such period it will be his duty to make a round of the facility, supervise over the drinking water sources and sanitary facilities, management of the medical stores, visit to the hospital and examination of the in-patients, attending to the inmates / staff / family members at the outdoor and management of records. There must be daily recording in the Minute Book of the Medical Officer and issues requiring administrative intervention should be reported to the Superintendent through the Controller/ Chief Controller in the form of entries in the Minute Book.
5. Once the Prison Management System Software is introduced, it shall be the responsibility of the Medical Officer to ensure that the medical history of the inmates is entered into the data base.
6. Medical Officer in charge of a central correctional home shall be responsible for preparing the roster of duties for all the Medical Officers and all shall abide by the authority of the said Medical officer in charge.

7. Under instructions of the senior-most Medical Officer in charge, all Medical Officers in a central correctional home shall have to perform duties in the night shift according to pre-scheduled roster.
8. In all central correctional homes having multiple posts of Medical Officers, it must be ensured that at any point of time one or the other of the Medical Officers is available in the facility. If necessary an officer may have to continue for longer period during a particular shift till his reliever takes position.
9. In case of the correctional homes where there is a single Medical Officer regular night shift may be difficult to adhere to. However, in such cases, the Medical Officer shall have to make himself available on call. At times when there are critical patients at the correctional home hospital requiring constant monitoring, the Medical Officer shall be at his/ her side irrespective of the time of the day.
10. While shifting patients from the correctional home to an outside hospital, the Medical Officer shall have to accompany the patient in case of critically ill inmate requiring medical support during transition.
11. All Medical Officer shall maintain the daily record book wherein the details of recommendations shall be recorded.
12. Leave of the Medical Officers on contract shall be governed by the provisions of Rule 213 of the West Bengal Service Rules, Part-I relating to leave entitlement of contractual employees in the Government of West Bengal. However, since it is an essential service the following stipulations will have to be adhered to:
  - a. In case the Medical Officer is on leave and is staying within the headquarters, he will have to attend the correctional home on emergent call, even though he is on leave.
  - b. In case of station leave, there must be written communication to the Superintendent. In all such cases, other Medical Officers attached to the correctional home shall divide amongst themselves the duties of the officer on leave as per an agreed at roster. In case of a correctional home where there is no other Medical Officer, a substitute qualified Government/ private medical practitioner must be available to attend the correctional home, on call. It will be the responsibility of the Medical Officer seeking station leave to arrange such substitute, who, however, shall be paid fees per call by the correctional home, if called.
13. Hospitalization of inmates and prescription of special medical diets to inmates should, in no case, be used as a favour. Each single case of hospitalization and medical diet should be objectively judged and the reasons must be recorded in writing. Medical diet prescribed to an inmate should be reviewed at appropriate interval and when the situation improves the inmate should be put to general diet. Reasons for keeping an inmate in the hospital ward for longer period must be

recorded in the Minute Book of the Medical Officer. There should be weekly review of hospitalization on a case to case basis which should be sent to the Superintendent.

14. Production in Court cannot be evaded by declaring an inmate sick. In case of unavoidable health complications resulting in confinement, the Medical Officer should record the reasons for recommendation of non-production in writing. Generally in-house hospitalization within the correctional home should not be a ground for non-production to Courts.
15. The same stipulations shall apply to the Medical Officers on part-time contract subject to the condition that their daily hours on duty shall generally be restricted to 4 hours only.
16. Service conditions of the Medical Officers deputed by the Health & Family Welfare Department shall be governed by the rules and regulations of the Health & Family Welfare Department. However, so far as the functionality of the system of medical care in correctional homes is concerned, the guidelines shall apply to those regular Medical Officers as well.

The guidelines are issued by the order of the Governor and takes immediate effect.

Sd./  
Additional Chief Secretary,  
Department of Jails

Copy forwarded to the Additional Director General of Police & Inspector General of Correctional Services with a request to circulate this set of operational guidelines to all the AIG of CS, DIG of CS, Superintendents and Medical Officers in the correctional homes for strict adherence.

Officer on Special Duty & ex-officio Deputy  
Secretary,  
Department of Jails