

# HEALTH SERVICES POLICY & PROCEDURE MANUAL

North Carolina Department Of Correction  
Division Of Prisons

SECTION: Personnel

POLICY # P-5

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SUBJECT: Use of Inmates in Delivery of Healthcare

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 2007

SUPERCEDES DATE: May 2002

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## PURPOSE

To provide guidelines in the use of inmates in delivery of health care.

## POLICY

Inmates, who have received proper training, may be assigned by Programs to work in the medical departments of prisons with chronic disease, long term care, medical observation, and processing units as Inmate Care Assistants (ICA). Refer to Program Services Resource Manual Policy "Inmate Care Assistant". ICA's are not allowed to care for acutely ill inmates in in-patient/infirmity settings; however, they may care for inmates whose treatment is complete and are awaiting discharge. The ICA will perform only those duties specified in policy. This includes assisting debilitated inmates in certain activities of daily living, running errands for the nursing staff and performing tasks on the medical unit such as stocking supplies. The ICA is not an inmate janitor although they may be required to clean up biological spills and assist in tidying up the medical unit. The ICA shall be closely monitored. They will be under the direct supervision of the nursing staff. The nurse manager will be responsible for orientation, competency assessment, compliancy review/evaluation and on-the-job training.

Inmate workers may also be used in a laboratory that makes prosthetic devices such as dentures or orthotics, provided that the laboratory is located outside the main clinic area.

## PROCEDURE

1. Measures shall be taken to assure that ICA's and inmate workers do not:
  - a. Schedule appointments for health care services;
  - b. Determine the access of other inmates to health care services;
  - c. Have access to surgical instruments, syringes, needles, medications, health records;
  - d. Operate equipment for which they are not trained.
2. Under no circumstances will inmates be assigned duties involving making arrangements for appointments for health care or handling any medical records/medications/or surgical instruments.

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3. Inmate Care Assistants may perform the following tasks:
- Mouth care – brushing teeth, moistening oral cavity with swabs, denture care
  - Skin care – applying lotion, prevention of skin breakdown
  - Hair care – washing, combing, braiding
  - Nail care with nail brush only – no clipping of nails
  - Assisting with dressing and undressing of clothes except for underwear
  - Turning and repositioning patient in bed or repositioning patient in chair
  - Transferring patient from bed to chair, chair to chair, to stretcher except to toilet
  - Using hydraulic lifts to lift and transfer patients
  - Assist patients with ambulation via walking, use of cane or walker, wheelchair
  - Assist patients to cafeteria, clothes-house, canteen and about the yard/unit
  - Perform range of motion exercises to joints to help maintain mobility
  - Prepare patient for meals; set up meal trays, insuring appropriate diet tray is served
  - Spoon-feed patient
  - Remind patient to go get their medications; take patient to medication window if needed
  - Measure and record intake (food and fluids by mouth) and output (urine and feces) as long as the inmate care assistant is not exposed to the patient's genitalia and buttocks
  - Carry out nurse's instructions on encouraging or restricting fluids
  - Assist with bladder and bowel elimination by taking inmate to toilet, providing bedpan or urinal container
  - Carry out nurse's instructions on toilet training (take to toilet at specified times of day) as long as inmate care assistant is not exposed to the patient's genitalia and buttocks.
  - Empty urinary drainage bags insuring not to be exposed to the patient's genitalia
  - Perform CPR and Heimlich maneuver
  - Instruct patients to deep breathe and cough to prevent pneumonia
  - Carry out infection control measures such as good hand-washing, standard precautions, to clean blood spills to eliminate potential blood borne pathogen and perform isolation techniques as instructed by nursing staff
  - Obtain weight and height
  - Apply heat and cold packs as instructed by licensed nurse
  - Apply TED hose (prevention of blood clots) and binders (back support)
  - Postmortem care (assisting nursing staff with preparing dead body for transport)
  - Make beds including linen exchange – keeping patient's room clean and orderly
  - Pick up supplies from medical to take to patient
  - Serve as a call bell/messenger to patient to get assistance from nursing
  - Run errands
    - obtain oxygen supply
    - pack patient's belongings (not medical record) and take to receiving for appointments
    - clean medical equipment e.g. wheelchairs, walker, whirlpool
    - fill up whirlpool
  - Assist nursing staff with lifting and moving medical equipment
  - Restock supplies (as long as no access to sharps, needles or other potential contraband)
  - Assemble blank medical record forms

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4. Inmate Care Assistants may **NOT** perform the following tasks:
- Any tasks exposing the inmate orderly to the patient's genitalia or buttocks
  - Clip or filing nails
  - Perform Douches
  - Give Enemas
  - Insert rectal tubes
  - Maintain gastric suction
  - Obtain Vital Signs
  - Perform Surgical Preps and Scrubs
  - Perform clean dressing changes
  - Apply and remove EKG leads

*Paula Y. Smith, M.D.*

**10/15/07**

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Paula Y. Smith, MD, Director of Health Services

Date

SOR: Director of Nursing