



**State of North Carolina  
Department of Public Safety  
Prisons**

Chapter: Health Care Manual  
Section: N-5  
Title: **Management of Offenders  
Refusing to Eat**  
Issue Date: 04/20/22  
Supersedes: May 2014  
Expiration: Policy Revision Publication

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***INTERIM POLICY AND PROCEDURE***

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**The purpose of this interim policy is to make a change to a policy prior to the annual review date. The interim policy will be incorporated into the actual policy during the next annual review. All interim policies shall be updated no more than six months past the annual review date.**

**NEW LANGUAGE**

References

**5<sup>th</sup> Edition Standards for Adult Correctional Institutions**

Related ACA Standards

**5-ACI-3B-14, 5-ACI-6A-05**

**Definitions**

Hunger Strike – **The conscious decision to refuse food or fluids for political, behavioral health, or other grievance-related concerns for at least 73 consecutive hours.**

**Outpatient Management**

- A. Health and Wellness Services provider staff will be notified by nursing and custody staff as soon as possible (within 24 hours or the next working day) following an offender's refusal **to consume food, with or without hydration,** for 48 hours so that close monitoring can begin prior to possible declaration of a hunger strike.
  
- B.
  - 2. Advise the offender of the potential physiological effects which may result from refusal to accept nourishment **and hydration which will be offered at regularly scheduled mealtimes. Document education in the electronic medical record.**
  
  - 7. Document baseline
    - a. Vital signs
    - b. Weight
    - c. CBC and **complete** metabolic panel
    - d. Urinalysis
  
- C.
  - 2. If it is determined by **behavioral** health evaluation that the offender has made a voluntary decision and has no mental disorder which impairs their ability to appreciate the risks inherent in continuation of hunger strike, the offender will **continue to be monitored according to policy.**

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3. If it is the opinion of the reviewing behavioral health staff that such a refusal is the result of a mental disorder which impairs the offender’s ability to appreciate risks inherent in continuation of hunger strike, the offender will be referred/transferred to an appropriate inpatient setting for intensive psychiatric/medical management, consideration for possible guardianship, and forced intervention as deemed appropriate by the responsible health authority at an inpatient facility.

E. If the patient’s medical condition deteriorates such that a serious medical outcome can be anticipated, the patient will be referred to an inpatient treatment facility (infirmery or CPHC) for observation and further medical management.

**SUMMARY:**

- The definition of Hunger Strike has been revised
- In the section titled “Outpatient Management,” the following has been revised to address offenders participating in a hunger strike:
  - A.
  - B. 2.
  - B. 7. c.
  - C. 2.
  - C. 3.
  - E.

**FILING:**

This Interim Policy will be filed in the Power DMS system and on the Prisons web page along with the original policy.

**RESPONSIBILITIES:**

The Director of Health and Wellness is responsible for ensuring the content of this interim policy and procedure is included in a revised policy and updated through the annual review process.




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Commissioner of Prisons

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April 20, 2022  
Date

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