



**STATE OF MONTANA  
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS  
POLICY DIRECTIVE**

Policy No. DOC 4.5.22	Subject: <b>OFFENDER HEALTH CARE CONTINUITY</b>
Chapter 4: FACILITY/PROGRAM SERVICES	Page 1 of 2
Section 5: Health Care	Effective Date: Jan. 1, 1998
Signature: /s/ Mike Ferriter, Director	Revised: 04/18/06; 10/27/09

**I. POLICY**

The Department of Corrections facility health unit will facilitate offender health care continuity from admission to discharge, including referral to community practitioners when indicated.

**II. APPLICABILITY**

The secure care facilities that include Riverside and Pine Hills Youth Correctional Facilities, Montana State Prison, Montana Women's Prison, and the private and regional facilities contracted to the Department of Corrections.

**III. DEFINITIONS**

Health Care Providers – Licensed health care providers (e.g., physicians, nurses, psychiatrists, dentists, and mental health practitioners), including contracted or fee-for-service providers, responsible for offender health care and treatment.

Health Care Staff – Includes licensed health care providers and non-licensed health care staff (e.g., medical records staff, health care aides) responsible for offender health care administration and treatment.

**IV. DEPARTMENT DIRECTIVES**

**A. Health Records**

1. Health care staff will:

- a. obtain offender health records from previous providers when the information is clinically relevant to the treatment of recurrent, chronic, or exacerbated health conditions in accordance with medical information release procedures pursuant to *DOC Policy 4.5.38, Offender Health Record Access, Release, and Retention*;
- b. when possible, anticipate the need for prior health records and information so that delays or alterations in prescribed care and treatment are minimized;
- c. consult previous providers by telephone with regard to an offender's condition when prior health care and treatment records have not been obtained; and
- d. handle health records for offenders transferring to other correctional facilities or community corrections programs in accordance with *DOC Policy 4.5.36, Health Records Transfer*.

**B. Offender Transports**

Health care staff will ensure written instructions accompany any offender needing medication or medical care during transport between Department facilities or programs.

Subject: **OFFENDER HEALTH CARE CONTINUITY**

**C. Release Plans**

Health care providers will make follow-up arrangements or provide referrals to community providers for offenders with critical medical or mental health needs.

**D. Discharge Orders**

1. Health care providers will write discharge orders when offenders are released and require prescription medication for the continuing treatment of chronic illness.
2. Offenders will receive up to a 30-day supply of medication.

**E. Acute Illness Medications**

When offenders are on acute illness medications at the time of release, health care providers will encourage them to take their medication cards to complete the course of therapy consistent with accepted medical practice.

**V. CLOSING**

Questions concerning this policy should be directed to the Department medical director.

**VI. REFERENCES**

- A. *National Commission on Correctional Health Care Standards, 2008*
- B. *DOC Policies 4.5.36, Health Records Transfer; 4.5.38, Offender Health Record Access, Release, and Retention*

**VII. ATTACHMENTS**

None.