

**Chapter 72.10 RCW**  
**HEALTH CARE SERVICES—DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS**

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**RCW 72.10.005 Intent—Application.** It is the intent of the legislature that inmates in the custody of the department of corrections receive such basic medical services as may be mandated by the federal Constitution and the Constitution of the state of Washington. Notwithstanding any other laws, it is the further intent of the legislature that the department of corrections may contract directly with any persons, firms, agencies, or corporations qualified to provide such services. Nothing in this chapter is to be construed to authorize a reduction in state employment in service component areas presently rendering such services or to preclude work typically and historically performed by department employees. [1989 c 157 s 1.]

**RCW 72.10.010 Definitions.** As used in this chapter:

- (1) "Department" means the department of corrections.
- (2) "Health care practitioner" means an individual or firm licensed or certified to actively engage in a regulated health profession.
- (3) "Health profession" means those licensed or regulated professions set forth in RCW 18.120.020(4).
- (4) "Health care facility" means any hospital, hospice care center, licensed or certified health care facility, health maintenance organization regulated under chapter 48.46 RCW, federally qualified health maintenance organization, federally approved renal dialysis center or facility, or federally approved blood bank.
- (5) "Health care services" means medical, dental, and mental health care services.
- (6) "Secretary" means the secretary of the department.
- (7) "Superintendent" means the superintendent of a correctional facility under the jurisdiction of the department, or his or her designee. [1995 1st sp.s. c 19 s 16; 1989 c 157 s 2.]

**Findings—Purpose—Short title—Severability—Effective date—1995 1st sp.s. c 19:** See notes following RCW 72.09.450.

**RCW 72.10.020 Health services delivery plan—Reports to the legislature—Policy for distribution of personal hygiene items.** (1) Upon entry into the correctional system, offenders shall receive an

initial medical examination. The department shall prepare a health profile for each offender that includes at least the following information: (a) An identification of the offender's serious medical and dental needs; (b) an evaluation of the offender's capacity for work and recreation; and (c) a financial assessment of the offender's ability to pay for all or a portion of his or her health care services from personal resources or private insurance.

(2) (a) The department may develop and implement a plan for the delivery of health care services and personal hygiene items to offenders in the department's correctional facilities, at the discretion of the secretary, and in conformity with federal law.

(b) To discourage unwarranted use of health care services caused by unnecessary visits to health care providers, offenders shall participate in the costs of their health care services by paying an amount that is commensurate with their resources as determined by the department, or a nominal amount of no less than four dollars per visit, as determined by the secretary. Under the authority granted in RCW 72.01.050(2), the secretary may authorize the superintendent to collect this amount directly from an offender's institution account. All copayments collected from offenders' institution accounts shall be a reduction in the expenditures for offender health care at the department.

(c) Offenders are required to make copayments for initial health care visits that are offender initiated and, by rule adopted by the department, may be charged a copayment for subsequent visits related to the medical condition which caused the initial visit.

(d) No offender may be refused any health care service because of indigence.

(e) At no time shall the withdrawal of funds for the payment of a medical service copayment result in reducing an offender's institution account to an amount less than the level of indigency as defined in chapter 72.09 RCW.

(3) (a) The secretary shall adopt, by rule, a uniform policy relating to the distribution and replenishment of personal hygiene items for inmates incarcerated in all department institutions. The policy shall provide for the initial distribution of adequate personal hygiene items to inmates upon their arrival at an institution.

(b) The acquisition of replenishment personal hygiene items is the responsibility of inmates, except that indigent inmates shall not be denied adequate personal hygiene items based on their inability to pay for them.

(c) The policy shall provide that the replenishment personal hygiene items be distributed to inmates only in authorized quantities and at intervals that reflect prudent use and customary wear and consumption of the items.

(4) To the extent that federal law allows and federal financial participation is available, for the limited purpose of implementing this section, the department, or the department's designee, is authorized to act on behalf of an inmate for purposes of applying for medicaid eligibility.

(5) The following become a debt and are subject to RCW 72.09.450:

(a) All copayments under subsection (2) of this section that are not collected when the visit occurs; and

(b) All charges for replenishment personal hygiene items that are not collected when the item is distributed.

(6) The department, in accordance with medically accepted best practices and in consultation with the health care authority, shall

develop and implement uniform standards across all of the department's correctional facilities for determining when a patient's current health status requires a referral for consultation or treatment outside the department. These standards must be based on the health care community standard of care to ensure medical referrals for consultation or treatment are timely and promote optimal patient outcomes. [2020 c 58 s 2; 2016 c 197 s 8; 2012 c 237 s 1; 1995 1st sp.s. c 19 s 17; 1989 c 157 s 3.]

**Findings—Purpose—Short title—Severability—Effective date—1995 1st sp.s. c 19:** See notes following RCW 72.09.450.

**RCW 72.10.030 Contracts for services.** (1) Notwithstanding any other provisions of law, the secretary may enter into contracts with health care practitioners, health care facilities, and other entities or agents as may be necessary to provide medical, behavioral health, and chemical dependency treatment care to inmates. The contracts shall not cause the termination of classified employees of the department rendering the services at the time the contract is executed.

(2) In contracting for services, the secretary is authorized to provide for indemnification of health care practitioners who cannot obtain professional liability insurance through reasonable effort, from liability on any action, claim, or proceeding instituted against them arising out of the good faith performance or failure of performance of services on behalf of the department. The contracts may provide that for the purposes of chapter 4.92 RCW only, those health care practitioners with whom the department has contracted shall be considered state employees.

(3) Providers of hospital services that are hospitals licensed under chapter 70.41 RCW shall contract with the department for inpatient, outpatient, and ancillary services if deemed appropriate by the department. Payments to hospitals shall conform to the following requirements:

(a) The department shall pay hospitals through the provider one system operated by the Washington state health care authority;

(b) The department shall reimburse the hospitals using the reimbursement methodology in use by the state medicaid program; and

(c) The department shall only reimburse a provider of hospital services to a hospital patient at a rate no more than the amount payable under the medicaid reimbursement structure plus a percentage increase that is determined in the operating budget, regardless of whether the hospital is located within or outside of Washington. [2012 c 237 s 2; 1989 c 157 s 4.]

**RCW 72.10.040 Rules.** The secretary shall have the power to make rules necessary to carry out the intent of this chapter. [1989 c 157 s 5.]

**RCW 72.10.050 Rules to implement RCW 72.10.020.** The department shall adopt rules to implement RCW 72.10.020. [1995 1st sp.s. c 19 s 18.]

**Findings—Purpose—Short title—Severability—Effective date—1995 1st sp.s. c 19:** See notes following RCW 72.09.450.

**RCW 72.10.060 Inmates who have received mental health treatment—Notification to treatment provider at time of release.** The secretary shall, for any person committed to a state correctional facility after July 1, 1998, inquire at the time of commitment whether the person had received outpatient mental health treatment within the two years preceding confinement and the name of the person providing the treatment.

The secretary shall inquire of the treatment provider if he or she wishes to be notified of the release of the person from confinement, for purposes of offering treatment upon the inmate's release. If the treatment provider wishes to be notified of the inmate's release, the secretary shall attempt to provide such notice at least seven days prior to release.

At the time of an inmate's release if the secretary is unable to locate the treatment provider, the secretary shall notify the health care authority and the behavioral health administrative services organization in the county the inmate will most likely reside following release.

If the secretary has, prior to the release from the facility, evaluated the inmate and determined he or she requires postrelease mental health treatment, a copy of relevant records and reports relating to the inmate's mental health treatment or status shall be promptly made available to the offender's present or future treatment provider. The secretary shall determine which records and reports are relevant and may provide a summary in lieu of copies of the records. [2019 c 325 s 5027; 2014 c 225 s 97; 1998 c 297 s 48.]

**Effective date—2019 c 325:** See note following RCW 71.24.011.

**Effective date—2014 c 225:** See note following RCW 71.24.016.

**Effective dates—Severability—Intent—1998 c 297:** See notes following RCW 71.05.010.

**RCW 72.10.070 Prison medical director—Qualifications.** (1) The department shall establish minimum job qualifications for the position of prison medical director in accordance with best practices.

(2) A candidate for prison medical director must meet the established minimum qualifications to be considered for the position.

(3) The established minimum qualifications shall be reviewed by the department every five years or more frequently as the department deems necessary.

(4) By December 1, 2020, and in compliance with RCW 43.01.036, the department shall report to the appropriate committees of the legislature the minimum job qualifications established and the status of implementing the minimum job qualifications throughout the department's correctional facilities. [2020 c 58 s 1.]