Prisoners' Legal Service

Prison News

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PEOPLE IN PRISON IN QLD
August 2024
Prisoners' Legal Service, GPO Box 257, Brisbane, Qld 4001

Health Care in Prison: Recent Updates

This edition of Prison News provides information about recent and upcoming changes to the way that health care is delivered in prisons in Queensland.

Access to unscheduled medicines

Unscheduled medicines are those that do not require a prescription or order from a doctor such as Paracetamol (Panadol) and Ibuprofen (Nurofen). In the wider community these medicines are available for purchase from shops and are taken 'PRN' (as required).

In keeping with the community standard and following a successful trial at the Townsville Correctional Centres, unscheduled medicines will progressively be made available for purchase in all prisons in Queensland. Initially only Paracetamol and Ibuprofen will be available for purchase with other medicines such as antacids (Mylanta, Gaviscon) expected to be made available in the future.

This will enable prisoners to be able to access pain relief as they need without the need to see a doctor or nurse.

Paracetamol and ibuprofen will still be available from health staff.

Electronic Medical Records

Queensland Health is making changes to the way they keep medical records for people in prison. Instead of keeping paper medical records, Queensland Health staff in prisons will soon start keeping records using an electronic system called 'Prisoner electronic Medical Record' (PeMR).

This electronic system will help to improve the way that health care is delivered, and medical appointments are managed whilst you are in prisons. It will also mean that some of your health information can be more easily accessed by health staff when you first come into prison or transferred between prisons.

Additionally, the use of the electronic system will mean that when you are released into the community, your prison health records will be accessible by your doctor online. However, doctors will not be able to tell that you received medical care in prison, and the location of where you received the care will remain confidential.

It is expected that the electronic system will first be used at Brisbane Women's Correctional Centre, Southern Queensland Correctional Centre and Helena Jones Correctional Centre from October 2024.

From around February 2025, the electronic system will be rolled out to other prisons.

This broadsheet is intended to provide legal information only and is no substitute for legal advice. If you wish to take any action arising from matters raised in this publication you should consult a lawyer immediately.

How do I access my health records?

If you need to access your health records, you can request a copy of the 'Application for Prison Health Record' form from the health care team at your prison. To make the application, you will need a copy of your prison ID.

The use of the Prisoner electronic Medical Record should not change the way you apply to access your medical records.

Concerned about your health care?

If you are concerned about the health care you are receiving in prison, you can consider taking the following steps:

Step 1: Talk to the nurse unit manager or doctor and ask if they can provide a solution.

Step 2: If talking to medical staff does not address to your concern, you can write to the Hospital and Health Service (HSS).

There are eight different HHSs across the State responsible for providing health care in prison. You can contact the HHS in charge of your prison by writing to them at the addresses below:

Arthur Gorrie, Borallon, Brisbane, Brisbane Women's, Wolston, Helena Jones, and SQCC West Moreton Hospital and Health Service, PO Box 73, Ipswich QLD 4305
Palen Creek Correctional Centre Beaudesert Hospital, Metro South Hospital and Health Service, 64 Tina Street Beaudesert QLD 4285
Numinbah Correctional Centre Gold Coast Hospital and Health Service, PO BOX 318, Nerang QLD 4211
Capricornia Correctional Centre Central Qld Hospital and Health Service, PO Box 871, Rockhampton QLD 4700
Townsville (Men's, Women's) Townsville Hospital and Health Service, PO Box 670, Townsville QLD 4810
Woodford Correctional Centre Caboolture Hospital, Metro North Hospital and Health Service, McKean Street, Caboolture, QLD 4510
Maryborough Correctional Centre Wide Bay Hospital and Health Service, PO Box 34, Bundaberg QLD 4670
Lotus Glen Correctional Centre Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service, PO Box 902, Cairns QLD 4870

External complaint options

You can also make external complaints about your health care to the Office of the Health Ombudsman and the Queensland Human Rights Commission. Generally, these agencies will require that you try to resolve your concerns with Queensland Health first (and in some cases Queensland Corrective Services), before they consider your complaint.

For more information about how to make external complaints, you can request copies of our *Health Care in Prison Factsheet* and *Human Rights and Discrimination Complaints Factsheet*.

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