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வட மேல் மாகாண சுகாதார சேவைகள் திணைக்களம்  
Department of Health Services – Northwestern Province



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எனது இல  
My No

NWP/PDHS/QM2/IC/2023

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உமது இல  
Your No

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திகதி  
Date

2023.10.16

**Internal Circular No – NWP/PDHS/07-02/02/2023**

Through the Regional Director of Health Services – Kurunegala / Puttalam  
All Medical Superintendents, All Divisional Medical Officers, All Medical Officers In -Charge  
All Specialist Grade Medical Officers, Grade Medical Officers, Grade Dental Surgeons, All  
Intern Medical Officers

**Guidelines for Issuing Medical Certificates**

This is to inform all Heads of Institutes that the following guidelines must be followed when issuing medical certificates:

1. Medical Certificates are required for the following purposes:
  - i. Absence from place of work or school due to illness or injury
  - ii. Certificates of Fitness
    - a) for employment, scholarship applications abroad, and driving licenses, should be issued to the relevant parties.
    - b) To Courts - to be excused from attending courts due to illness or injury or, on the order of a Magistrate or judge regarding fitness to attend, when a person does not attend courts citing medical reasons.
    - c) To be exempted from performing certain functions, such as sitting for an examination, engaging in work that requires much exertion, disability due to illness or injury preventing a person from attending to some aspects of his job requirements, etc.
  - iii. Insurance purposes - either upon request from the insurer to assess the suitability for insurance acceptance or to submit a claim for an insurance award.
  - iv. Disability Certificate - for compensation, etc.
  - v. Provident fund- when medically condemned, or retirement on medical grounds
  - vi. Certificates relating to the medical cause of death of a person - eg. For insurance purposes -Accident/ Homicide/Natural (not paid if Suicide), Stomach contents - smelling of liquor in accidental death (Road Traffic Accident or otherwise)
  - vii. Miscellaneous - certification of testamentary capacity- the true mental state of the person should be stated and the doctor should not be a beneficiary, either directly or indirectly.
2. Doctors are legally entitled to issue Medical Certificates under **Section 37 of the Medical Ordinance**, and the information contained in them must be truthful and accurate. Extreme care must be exercised when writing Medical Certificates, as they often serve as legal documents and may face challenges. The primary concern when issuing a Medical Certificate should be to accurately state the patient's true health condition. Therefore, the doctor is expected to provide truthful information, which may, at times, conflict with other interests of the patient, a matter of no concern to the doctor.



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3. Medical Certificates are confidential documents and should either be personally handed over to the patient or delivered to the relevant authority requiring it.
4. In certain circumstances, a third party may require a Medical Certificate, and the doctor may issue one if deemed appropriate. Doctors are advised to maintain a related record or a copy of the certificate for future reference.
5. It should be noted that a **Medical Certificate issued for one specific purpose should not be used for another**. For instance, a Medical Certificate requested to justify absence from work should not be presented in court. This condition must be explicitly stated in the certificate and conveyed to the patient or third party.
6. A Medical Certificate for an individual with an illness **should be issued by the attending doctor**. The doctor must accurately identify the patient, verifying their identity if necessary. The doctor should evaluate the patient's condition and determine the necessary duration of rest required for recovery from the illness. This duration should be based on the doctor's assessment and not solely on the patient's request.
7. Employer's regulations must be adhered to when issuing medical certificates. For example, in Government Service:
  - i. The approved leave period should generally not exceed one month at a time, with a maximum of two months.
  - ii. Afterward, it can be granted for two weeks at a time, for an additional one month, unless specific Circulars or instructions dictate otherwise.
  - iii. For instance, there may be different regulations for maternity leave or recommendations from Medical Boards, especially for patients with tuberculosis, that must be followed.
8. If a person requires leave in excess of three months, a medical board has to be recommended. **Leave exceeding two weeks granted to a public servant can only be recommended by a Government Medical Officer.**
9. The chapter XXIII, Volume I of the establishment code (E code) with its update issued by the Public Administration Circular 23/2019 dated 28.08.2019 must be strictly adhered in issuing Medical certificates/Conducting medical boards and issuing special leave for Public officers for the following diseases;
  - 1.1 Tuberculosis
  - 1.2 Leprosy
  - 1.3 Cancer (Updated issued by the Public Administration Circular 23/2019 dated 28.08.2019 ) which have a definite positive out come and good prognosis with longterm treatment.
10. Backdating leave requests should generally not exceed three days, unless the patient was hospitalized, and the physician should be prepared to provide a valid reason for such retroactive leave based on the nature of the illness. In all cases, the minimum necessary leave period should be advised.
11. The Medical Certificate must include the patient's complete name, age, gender, address, illness description, fitness for duty status, and the recommended leave period. **The doctor's signature, along with their name, SLMC registration details, official designation, address, and date, should be clearly written. Having a rubber stamp for this purpose is advisable.**

**12. When issuing a Fitness Certificate excusing a person from attending court:**

- i. Utmost care must be taken by the practitioner.
- ii. The time and date of the examination should be clearly stated, with no backdating allowed.
- iii. A comprehensive record of the patient's condition and the practitioner's findings must be maintained and secured.
- iv. The period of unfitness for court attendance and the expected recovery date should be included in the certificate.
- v. The diagnosis or nature of the illness must be clearly stated.
- vi. If it is suspected by the doctor **that patient tactics were used to avoid court**, this fact must be disclosed to the courts. For instance, non-urgent treatment may have been sought by the patient without disclosing the need for court attendance, followed by a request for an exemption certificate, resulting in unfitness for court.
- vii. Similarly, the doctor must ensure that the patient is not attempting to evade attending courts by submitting a medical certificate or trying to get undue advantage or sympathy. The doctor should never be a party, directly or indirectly to such an attempt.
- viii. The doctor must be aware of their obligation to the patient and their responsibility to the court for the administration of natural justice. The court may request a second opinion from another doctor regarding a medical certificate. This doctor must act independently and not be influenced by the earlier certificate, regardless of their position.

**13. Exercise caution in the following aspects when issuing medical certificates for insurance:**

- i. Certificates can be issued for:
  - Recovery of healthcare expenses.
  - Insurance benefits to family members upon the insured person's death.
- ii. Correct and accurate information should be provided, regardless of whether the person benefits.
- iii. The certificate should be ensured to be delivered to the rightful legal claimant in case of death.
- iv. It should be noted that these certificates may face legal challenges, so exercise caution.
- v. If the cause of death was aggravated by the patient's habits (e.g., alcohol consumption), such facts should be disclosed, even if they affect the beneficiaries' claims.

You are hereby instructed to strictly adhere to the above guidelines when issuing medical certificates, ensuring accuracy and confidentiality.

The above instructions should be brought to the attention of your subordinates.



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5. Secretary, Ministry of Health, North-Western Province . -f.y.i
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