

## **GPI: Health Policy**

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Signed: .....  
Portfolio Holder for Policies

**Policy Name:** GPI Health Policy

**Policy Number:** GPI 004

**Reference:**

*GPI Work Cover scheme (yet to be drafted)*

*GPI Social Welfare Policy (yet to be drafted)*

*GPI Law recommendations: Fraud and Privacy Act.*

Dental & Medical Practitioners Ordinance. CAP 24 393

LAWS OF PITCAIRN, HENDERSON, DUCIE AND OENO ISLANDS

*Revised Edition 2001*

CHAPTER XXIV

**DENTAL AND MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS ORDINANCE**

Arrangement of sections

Section

1. Citation.

2. Restriction upon practice of dentistry, medicine, surgery.

3. Licence to practice in other approved country to confer authority to practice in Islands.

4. Other authority to practice in Islands.

5. Offences.

[2001 Ed. *Dental and Medical Practitioners CAP.24*] 394

An ordinance to regulate the practice of dentistry, medicine and surgery in the Islands.[26th January, 1984]

**1.** This ordinance may be cited as the Dental and Medical Practitioners Ordinance.

**2.** No person shall practise or perform dentistry (which expression shall include oral surgery), or medicine or surgery, unless authorised to do so by the provisions of this ordinance.

**3.** —(1) Every person who applies to the administration for appointment to a residential post in the Islands which includes the practice of dentistry, or medicine or surgery, shall provide to PIO all available information relative to his or her medical or dental qualifications and experience as an essential part of that application.

(2) Upon consideration of a report by PIO on such application the Governor may in his discretion grant to the applicant a licence to practise dentistry, or medicine or surgery, in the Islands, for such period and subject to such conditions as he may think fit.

(3) Any person currently holding any such office referred to in subsection (1) at the time of the commencement of this section shall be deemed to have been granted a licence by the Governor under subsection (2) to practise dentistry, or medicine or surgery, in the Islands for the period of his or her appointment.]

**(Replaced by Ordinance No. 4 of 2002)**

**4.** Any person who is authorised by law in any other country or place to practise dentistry, or medicine or surgery, may in any circumstances of emergency provide or attempt to provide such dental, medical or surgical treatment as may be necessary to protect the vital interests of another person and shall be deemed on such occasion to be licensed under this ordinance to do so.]

**(Replaced by Ordinance No. 4 of 2002)**

**4A.** Any medical practitioner or dentist travelling on board a vessel which is visiting the Islands may be granted a temporary licence for the purposes of section 2 during the period of such visit, by the Mayor acting on the advice of the Medical Officer, to carry out such normal medical or dental advice or treatment as may be required by any person resident in the Islands.

**4B.**—(1) No person practising dentistry, medicine or surgery, pursuant to the provisions of section 3, section 4 or section 4A of this ordinance may be sued in any court for damages, costs, compensation, or reparation of any kind resulting from any act or omission in the course of so practising unless the same has occurred by reason of gross negligence or wilful misconduct of such person.

(2) The immunity conferred by subsection (1) shall extend, notwithstanding any rule of law or enactment to the contrary, to the Crown, the Governor, the administration, the Island Council or any member thereof or to any other person, authority or employer by reason of vicarious liability for the acts or omissions of such person practising dentistry, medicine or surgery and subject only to the said exceptions.]

**(Inserted by Ordinance No. 4 of 2002)**

**5.** Every person who shall practise or perform dentistry, or medicine or surgery, within the Islands, without being authorised to do so under the provisions of this ordinance shall commit an offence punishable upon conviction by a fine not exceeding five hundred dollars or imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months or by both such fine and imprisonment.

**Rationale:**

Pitcairn Island is an isolated community. Transport on and off island is difficult, so it is essential to provide services that enable the majority of health management to be undertaken on island. GPI will provide a high standard of health care to the Pitcairn community in the areas of health management, health promotion and preventative health care.

This policy also ensures that medical treatment overseas is available to all permanent residents of Pitcairn Islands when treatment cannot be administered on island.

Injuries or illness relating to the work place, on-island paid maternity leave and paid special parental leave are covered in the GPI Work Cover Scheme. These benefits are only applicable when the applicant remains on the Pitcairn Islands.

**Definitions:**

Primary health care covers a broad range of out-of-hospital services. It aims to improve the community health by working with them through health improvement and preventative services such as health education and counselling, disease prevention and screening. Primary health care includes services such as general practice, nursing, pharmacy, family planning, mental health and well being, dentistry, optometry, audiology, physiotherapy, chiropractic, osteopathy and acupuncture.

Secondary health care is treatment requiring hospitalisation. Pitcairn Island does not have these facilities, so patients requiring secondary care must be sent overseas for treatment.

The Pitcairn Islands Office in Auckland is known as the PIO.

The Secretariat of the Pacific Community is known as SPC.

The French Polynesian Government is known as FPG.

NZ is the abbreviation for New Zealand.

Chronic illness refers to a persistent and recurring illness lasting three months or more and incurring significant disturbance and impairment to physical, psychological or social wellbeing.

**Policy Objectives:**

To provide comprehensive primary health services to the Pitcairn Islands' permanent residents and to coordinate with medical services abroad when necessary for secondary care.

**Activities:****1.0 GPI provides primary health services to all Pitcairn Islands' residents from neo-natal to geriatric care.**

- The Pitcairn Health Centre currently provides general practice, nursing, x-ray, and dental and pharmacy services.
- The general practitioner is known as the Medical Officer.
- All medical practitioners submit their qualifications to the Pitcairn Islands Office and the Community Development Division Manager as per the Dental and Medical Practitioners' Ordinance
- A copy of medical practitioners' registrations/qualifications is publically displayed in the Pitcairn Health Centre.

- Medical Officers will supply patients with a copy of their on-island medical records on request.
- All patients treated at the Pitcairn Health Centre pay for services as per the designated clinic charges (Annex A.) Visiting Pitcairn relatives will pay full fees the first six months. Off-islanders, as long time temporary residents, will always pay full fees, as their income bracket does not qualify them for subsidies.
- Persons suffering from chronic illnesses will pay 1/3 of their medication cost.

## **2.0 GPI/PIO coordinates with International SOS and provides Medivac services as deemed necessary by the Medical Officer. ( See Annex C – Medivac Procedure Doc)**

- The Medical Officer undertakes medical assessment of all patients on an individual basis to ascertain whether evacuation for treatment is necessary or if the patient can be safely treated on island.
- Only permanent residents of Pitcairn Island, who are deemed to be so under the Pitcairn Islands Immigration Ordinance, shall be eligible to make an application for treatment overseas under this Policy.
- A Medical Certificate/Certificate of Recommendation must be signed by the Pitcairn Island Medical Officer and the Island Mayor to accompany each application. (see Annex D)
- The patient must report to the Consulting Physician within one week of arrival at the designated destination and shall faithfully follow any instructions concerning prescribed medical treatment.
- All permanent residents of the Pitcairn Islands, if overseas for any reason, are duty bound to have a general medical, dental and optical examination if it has been a year or more since their last examination. The costs of the examination and any resulting tests or treatment will be paid for by GPI as stated in Activity 9.
- Chiropractical and other alternative treatment will be covered by Compassionate Grant, after approval for treatment has been obtained from GPI beforehand. Patient's preferred treatment must be negotiated with Medical Officer and PIO

## **3.0 The Medical Officer ensures that test results are followed up and recorded in individual patient files at the Pitcairn Health Centre.**

- PIO ensures that the medical practitioners, seen by the patient while overseas, send copies of all medical records to the Medical Officer at the Pitcairn Health Centre.

## **4.0 GPI provides appropriate testing facilities for analysis of biopsies and medical samples.**

- GPI coordinates with PIO, NZ, SPC and FPG to provide this service, at the closest or most convenient facility, to achieve the most accurate results and fastest response possible.

## **5.0 GPI provides primary care practitioners on Island when necessary for patient care when it is more economical than Medivac.**

- The Medical Officer tracks all medical care of all permanent residents of the Pitcairn Islands and recommends to GPI when treatment is required.

**6.0 The Pitcairn Health Centre Staff provide health education and preventative health advice to the Pitcairn Island community as and when appropriate.**

- GPI requires that the medical staff of Pitcairn Health Centre provide health education and/or preventative health advice on an ongoing and regular basis to the Pitcairn Island Community. The education provided will be approved and funded by GPI based upon recommendations from the Medical Officer and the Community Care Officer.
- The Medical Office and staff at the Pitcairn Health Centre provide annual First Aid training to ensure that all First Aid certificates are current.

**7.0 The Pitcairn Health Centre staff will ensure that all consultations are private and patient confidentiality is kept at all times.**

- All staff employed by the Pitcairn Health Centre agrees to abide by the GPI confidentiality agreement in their GPI Employment Contract thus protecting the privacy rights of patients in their care.

**8.0 The Medical Officer will provide medical certificates and assessment in the case of illness, accidents or injury in the work place. Treatment of injury or illness of GPI employees is covered under the conditions in the Work Cover Scheme Policy.**

*Refer to Work Cover Policy*

**9.0 Pitcairn Island permanent residents requiring medical treatment overseas, as deemed necessary by the Medical Officer, are entitled to the following benefits:**

**1) For persons whose sole income from government sources is derived by virtue of Part II and III of the Social Welfare Benefits Ordinance i.e. senior citizens and children under the age of 16 years.**

- The whole cost of return travel between Pitcairn Island and the appropriate designated destination as determined by GPI.
- The whole cost of hospitalisation, consultation and operation fees.
- The whole cost of post-operative care approved by the Consulting Physician.

GPI provides a Senior Citizen ID card for patients to qualify for senior citizen discounts on services abroad as appropriate.

**2) For any other person not included in the above and not covered under the Work Cover Scheme, GPI will cover:**

- Two thirds of the return travel between Pitcairn Island and the appropriate designated destination as determined by GPI.
- Two thirds of the cost of the hospitalisation, consultation and operation fees.
- Two thirds of the cost of post-operative care approved by the Consulting Physician.
- The applicant will receive funding as stated above, provided he/she returns to Pitcairn Island on the first available opportunity, unless he/she is still receiving medical treatment (or at such

time as approved by GPI). In which case, a certificate signed by the Consulting Physician shall be sent to GPI via PIO.

- Failure to comply with the above will render the applicant liable for the full passage and hospital costs.
- GPI requires repayment of the relevant fees from the patient within a time frame as agreed with the applicant and/or their family on a case by case basis, once the relevant amount of expenses accrued has been determined, and once the applicant is declared fit by the Consulting Physician.

**10.0 A Pitcairn Island Permanent Resident seeking overseas medical treatment will have the opportunity to be accompanied if deemed necessary.**

- GPI may approve the payment of a passage grant in respect of a caregiver, for two thirds of the return fare between Pitcairn Island and the designated destination. If in the opinion of GPI and the Medical Officer, such a caregiver is required because the applicant is incapacitated this will be approved. Consideration will be given on application for off Island aftercare on a case by case basis. Ideally this care will be provided by professionals at the designated destination, for a limited time.
- GPI may, in addition to the above award, approve the payment of a passage grant in respect of the applicant's dependent child/children under 5 years of age, equal to the full amount of the return fare between Pitcairn Island and the designated destination. This will apply if in the opinion of GPI and the Medical Officer, it is in the interest of the applicant or their children that they should accompany their parent/s and no alternative option is available on Island. Children of school age should be encouraged to continue to attend school.
- Any person receiving a passage grant, as stated above, shall be subject to the same provisions as to the return to Pitcairn Island as for the applicant him/herself.
- GPI requires repayment of the relevant fees for the accompanying person within the same time frame as the patient's fees. These expenses will be combined with the Patient's expenses and repayment terms will be as noted above.

**11.0 The applicant may be entitled to a Cost of Living Allowance, if necessary, whilst seeking medical treatment overseas.**

- A non-recoverable Cost of Living Allowance is available to those in need of medical treatment overseas, from the day of arrival at an approved designated destination. This is available provided the patient returns to Pitcairn Island at the first available opportunity, after clearance by the consulting physician.
- Beneficiaries under parts II, III, and IV of the Social Welfare Ordinance will receive, in addition to their pension or benefit, the Cost of Living Allowance.
- The Cost of Living Allowance will be withdrawn if the applicant or their caregiver is employed for financial gain or is in receipt of a benefit that is more than the Cost of Living Allowance or, leaves an approved designated destination without the approval of GPI.
- The daily Cost of Living allowance is available to both the applicant and accompanying caregiver. Half of the allowance will be directly credited to the accommodating family by PIO.

- The daily Cost of Living Allowance is set at \$20.00 per day per person.

**12.0 A Pitcairn Island Permanent Resident seeking overseas medical treatment has the opportunity to apply for further financial assistance.**

- In addition, GPI may approve an interest free loan to the applicant for the purpose of meeting their share of transport costs or living costs, or other reasonable expenses of the applicant (and dependents, if any). Provided that any such loan shall be recoverable from the applicant or a guarantor within an agreed period. See annex E.

**13.0 Falsification of information relating to medical applications will be considered fraudulent and may be subject to legal action.**

**Annexes**

Annex A - Pitcairn Island Health Charges Doc

Annex B - GPI Medivac Procedure Doc

Annex C - GPI MO Medivac Application Form Doc

Annex D - GPI Medivac Repayment Contract Form

Annex E - GPI Employee Confidentiality Policy

This Policy is approved by:

Date:

This Policy is effective as of:

Date: 15<sup>th</sup> July 2008

Approved Review Date: