



GOVERNMENT OF PITCAIRN ISLANDS

PITCAIRN ISLANDS COUNCIL

HEALTH POLICY

Reference:

LAWS OF PITCAIRN, HENDERSON, DUCIE AND OENO ISLANDS

Revised Edition 2001

CHAPTER XXIV

Dental & Medical Practitioners Ordinance. CAP 24, 393

GPI Health & Safety Policy

Part II and III of the Social Welfare Benefits Ordinance

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.

In the past the New Zealand Hospital system was used for secondary care this was mainly because of the shipping service available to Pitcairn. As shipping arrangements have changed Pitcairn is utilising the port at Mangareva, French Polynesia for travel and secondary medical treatment. Tahiti due to its closeness to Pitcairn is the preferred primary location for all secondary appointments as it is a lesser burden financially on HMG and reduces the duration the patient is off island.

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 and audiology.

Secondary health care is treatment requiring hospitalisation. Pitcairn Island does not have these facilities, so patients requiring secondary care will be sent to Tahiti as a first priority and/or long medical care may must be sent overseas for treatment.

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.

Category A: refers to patients needing medical treatment overseas and all travel costs to be covered. The patient will pay a 1/3 of the total medical and travel costs.

Category B: refers to medical treatment only and does not cover travel. This category is used when a person is going overseas for personal reasons. The patient will pay 1/3 of the total medical treatment.

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:

No subsidy shall be granted to any person under the provisions of this policy unless such person is ordinarily resident on Pitcairn Island.



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- 1. 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 term temporary residents, will always pay full fees.
 - Persons suffering from chronic illnesses will pay 1/3 of their medication cost.

- 2. GPI/PIO coordinates with Healix 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, and if necessary off-islanders 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 Division Manager accompany each application. (see Annex D)
 - The patient must report to the Hospital/ Consulting Physician to attend their scheduled appointment and shall faithfully follow any instructions concerning prescribed medical treatment.
 - If a patient is attending a scheduled medical appointment overseas and if it has been a year or more since their last full medical check up the MO is to liaise with Healix for appointments.
 - 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.



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- 3. The Medical Officer ensures that test results are followed up and recorded in individual patient files at the Pitcairn Health Centre.**
 - Healix 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. GPI provides appropriate testing facilities for analysis of biopsies and medical samples.**
 - GPI coordinates with PIO to provide this service, at the closest or most convenient facility, to achieve the most accurate results and fastest response possible.
- 5. 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. 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. 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. 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 Health & Safety Policy.**
- 9. The Medical Officer along with the Nurse are responsible for completing the Annex C form and acquire the patients signature. Pitcairn Island permanent residents requiring medical treatment overseas, as deemed necessary by the Medical Officer, are entitled to the following benefits:**
 - 1) For any person/s 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 GPI will cover:**
 - The whole cost of return travel between Pitcairn Island and the appropriate designated destination as determined by GPI. Travel bookings confirmed by PIO are to remain in place with no variation unless specifically agreed by Council. Any other costs will be met by the individual.



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- The whole cost of hospitalisation, consultation and operation fees.
- The whole cost of post-operative care approved by the Consulting Physician.

2) For permanent resident/s not included in the above GPI will cover:

- Two thirds of the return travel between Pitcairn Island and the appropriate designated destination as determined by the Medical Officer and Healix anything outside of the preferred secondary medical destination will require the patient to pay for travel on their own accord.
- Travel bookings confirmed by PIO are to remain in place with no variation unless specifically agreed by Council. Any other costs will be met by the individual.
- 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 the Medical Officer and/or Healix.
- Failure to comply with the above will render the applicant liable for the full passage and medical 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. 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.



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- 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. 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 from any other source 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 \$40.00 per day per person only when the patient is required in New Zealand for further secondary medical treatment. The Cost of Living Allowance will only be paid up until you have medical clearance by the Doctor or Specialist and you leave on the first available ship. If the patient once medically cleared and decides to extend their stay the Cost of Living Allowance will be stopped.
- In all cases every effort will be made to minimise the time referred patients spend off island. Should a patient wish to remain overseas after having received the "all clear" to travel by the Doctor/s treating them, all associated costs will have to be done by the patient.

12. Medications

- If a resident or non resident places an order for a specific item/medication and it arrives on the supply ship the person/s is obligated to take the order and if not they will be billed for the item and the Clinic will not be burdened with an item that can't be prescribed to anyone else.

13. 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.

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

15. Patients must travel when the Medical Officer says, not when it suits them. Failure to do so could result in your medical condition becoming worse. The Medical Officer will not arrange for an alternative date for medical appointment/s.



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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

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Approved by the Island Council

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