



**STATE OF MONTANA  
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS  
POLICY DIRECTIVE**

Policy No. DOC 4.5.45	Subject: <b>HEALTH CARE LIAISON</b>	
Chapter 4: FACILITY/PROGRAM SERVICES		Page 1 of 3
Section 5: Clinical Services		Effective Date: January 4, 2021
Department Director Signature: /s/ Cynthia Wolken		Revised:
Medical Director Signature: /s/ Dr. Paul Rees		
Clinical Services Division Administrator Signature: /s/ Connie Winner		

**I. POLICY**

The Department of Corrections will ensure health services continue to be coordinated when qualified health and mental health professionals are not available.

**II. APPLICABILITY**

All secure care facilities Department-owned and contracted.

**III. DEFINITIONS**

**Health Care Liaison** – May be custody staff or an individual who is not a qualified health care professional who is instructed by the responsible physician or designee in limited aspects of health care coordination.

**Mental Health Liaison** – May be a custody staff or other person who is not a qualified mental health professional who is instructed by the responsible mental health clinician or designee in limited aspects of mental health care coordination

**Qualified Health Professional** –Physicians, physician assistants, nurses, nurse practitioners, dentists, mental health professionals and others who by virtue of their education, credentials, and experience are permitted by law to evaluate and care for offenders, including contracted or fee-for service professionals.

**Qualified Mental Health Professionals** – Psychiatrists, psychologists, psychiatric social workers, psychiatric nurses, licensed professional counselors and others who by virtue of their education, credentials, and experience are permitted by law to evaluate and care for the mental health needs of offenders.

**Responsible Health Authority** – The Clinical Services Division Administrator that is tasked with ensuring the organization and delivery of health care in the facility.

**Responsible Physician** – A designated person who holds a physician’s license pursuant to 37-3-102 and 37-3-303, MCA has the final authority at a given facility regarding clinical issues.

**IV. DEPARTMENT DIRECTIVES**

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### **A. General Requirements**

1. A designated, trained health care liaison coordinates health services delivery in all Department secure facilities on days when no qualified health care professionals are on-site for a continuous 24-hour period.
2. The health care liaison is instructed in the role and responsibilities by the responsible physician or designee.
3. The mental health liaison is instructed in the role and responsibilities by the responsible mental health clinician or designee.

### **B. Health Care Liaison**

1. The responsible health authority works with the responsible physician to ensure the duties that can be assigned to a health care liaison are limited to providing access to care.
2. The health care liaison must have a plan that includes contact information for the on-call health staff, ambulance, and other emergency community contacts.
3. The health care liaison generally carries out the following duties at a minimum:
  - a. reviews receiving screening forms for follow-up attention;
  - b. reviews nonemergency health care requests as instructed by the responsible physician;
  - c. helps to carry out prescriber's orders regarding such matters as diet, housing and work assignments; and
  - d. maintains patient privacy

### **C. Mental Health Liaison**

1. The mental health liaison must have a plan that tells staff what to do when a mental health situation arises when mental health staff are not present.
2. The mental health liaison generally carries out the following duties at a minimum:
  - a. reviews receiving screening forms for follow-up attention;
  - b. reviews nonemergency mental health care requests as instructed by the responsible mental health clinician;
  - c. helps to carry out clinician's orders regarding such matters as housing and work assignments; and
  - d. maintains patient privacy

### **V. CLOSING**

Questions concerning this policy should be directed to the Clinical Services Division Administrator.

### **VI. REFERENCES**

- A. *P-C-08; National Commission on Correctional Health Services in Prisons, 2018*

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*B. MH-C-08; National Commission on Correctional Mental Health Services in Correctional Facilities, 2015*

*C. Y-C-08; National Commission on Correctional Health Services in Juvenile Detention and Confinement Facilities, 2015*

**VII. ATTACHMENTS**

None