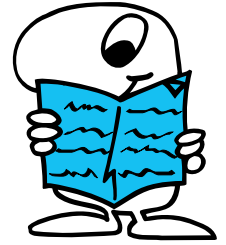


Initiative for Sub-District Support



Kwik-Skwiz
#17

The Registry at District level - A vital part of administration in the Health District -

File for quick reference

The Issue

For any district health system to function effectively and efficiently it is important to have a well functioning administration. The different functions of district administration within the health system contribute towards a well functioning district. This was discussed in Kwik Skwiz # 12, which dealt with 'Administration' in the Health District.

This Kwik Skwiz, however, is designed to inform you about one of the most important and often neglected components of the whole health system, namely the service provided by the registry section. The registry provides a strong foundation for all the other health services by storing and distributing vital information in a logical and easily accessible manner. If the registry foundation is weak the entire health building will also be weakened.

But what is the registry and why is it so important?

A registry is an important component of the general office services in the district office.

The registry section is responsible for :

- > the classification of records,
- > the receipt and flow of documentation, and
- > the control, custody, care and disposal of records.

Why is a registry necessary?

It is critical that all documents in the health district office are kept in an organised manner for future reference and retrieval. Registry work is therefore an essential component of a district office structure and calls for capable personnel, proper facilities and systematic procedures. The registry controls the formal communication channel between sections and people outside the district office and helps with the flow of information in the communication network.

A situational analysis was conducted in the Mount Frere district and gaps were found in the registry. A similar situation was identified during the situation analysis in the Tonga and Shongwe districts. These gaps have led to serious breakdowns in the communication system. It is therefore necessary to implement a well-functioning registry section for the health service in the district.

The registry section

The registry section functions can be divided into two main areas as illustrated below:

DISTRICT REGISTRY FUNCTIONS	
FIRST AREA POSTAL PROCESS	SECOND AREA CLASSIFICATION, CONTROL, CUSTODY AND CARE OF IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS
<p>The area deals with the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • receipt; • distribution; and • flow of documentation 	<p>The area deals with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the physical care of documentation; • control and access to files; • control of document movement; • classification of documentation received by the district office; and accessible filing system • The control and distribution of incoming and outgoing mail.

Role players in the registry section

To ensure an efficient and effective registry the role players involved in the registry section at the district level must represent the various managerial levels. The following role players should be involved in the registry process:

- District Manager
- Head of Administration
- Section Heads
- Registry Clerks

The registry clerk is key to the successful functioning of a registry. The registry clerk should be careful, orderly, give attention to detail and possess good communication skills.

<p>The role of the registry clerk:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • receive post, parcels and remittances/transferable items; • write the correct reference number on all incoming correspondence and other documents; • file the post; • circulate and search for files; • control outgoing post; • control the movement of files; • control the closure and termination of files and records other than correspondence files; • prepare and open file covers; • check the use of daily files; and • keep important registers such as remittance and destruction registers

Setting up and improving the registry function

The following section provides some guidelines and suggest some of the important steps that may help to improve the efficiency of the general office services and registry at district level.

Here are four easy steps to set up a registry office:

Step 1: Identify a venue.

Step 2: Establish a layout for the registry.

Step 3: Furnish the registry.

Step 4: Develop and maintain the most important registers.

- It is imperative to have a telephone system that will meet the needs of this section.
- When you choose accommodation there should be sufficient office space with adequate lighting.
- It is crucial to mark all the furniture in the registry office and to keep an inventory.
- Each staff member should have adequate equipment to assist them in their work. These include movable pigeonholes for sorting, table(s) for the opening and dispatch of post as well as for the supervisor, a trolley to carry files, lockable filing cabinets, shelves, a post dispatchment cabinet, stationary such as date stamps, scissors and staplers.

As was mentioned before, there are *two main process sections* in the registry, namely the postal process and the storing and retrieval of documents.

- The *postal process* is a significant part of the communication of the district office. This applies both to internal and external communication with other offices and also with community members.
 - Incoming post requires key activities undertaken to collect post, open post, sort postal articles and handle monies, remittances and transferable items.
 - post must be collected and delivered daily and the registry should be closed while mail is opened.
 - Outgoing post is handled by the dispatch clerk who date stamps the post, ensures that reference numbers are inserted and annexures are attached.

Registry clerks must follow the instructions as set out in the Postal Guide by the National Archives.

- The *storing and retrieval of documents* through a *filing system* is another important section of the registry office and therefore a main filing series must be developed.

The purpose of the filing system is:

- classification of documentation received and sent by the organisation
- the physical care of documentation
- control and access to files
- control of document movement

The filing system must be logical and as simple as possible. All records and documents are about certain subjects. These issues can be grouped together in a file. Records are filed to store documents and to ensure easy and quick access when needed. Filing must be done on a regular basis to avoid accumulation and the possible loss of correspondence. The personnel section must develop a similar filling system where personnel correspondence is stored and kept in custody.

Registers for internal control:

It is necessary to identify different registers to ensure a smooth-running registry section. These registers are:

- Registers for documents received and sent by registered or certified post
- Remittance register
- Registers for correspondence received and dispatched
- Register for stamp or franking machines
- Register of opened files
- Register of file movements
- Disposal authorities register.

The supervisor for the registry function should support the keeping of these registers and sign the registers when supervisory visits have been done.

Conclusion

When a health district office experiences a breakdown in the communication system or the efficiency of the total health service delivery is influenced, it is often due to a poor registry section. A user-friendly **how to do guide** has been developed by **ISDS** and is available. This will assist health district personnel in developing effective registry sections. Districts may also contact their nearest office of the National Archives department for guidelines and assistance. The offices and telephone numbers are:

Pretoria (Head Office) (012) 323 5300

Bloemfontein (051) 522 6762

Pietermaritzburg (0331) 424 712

Port Elizabeth (041) 546 451

Durban (031) 309 5681

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