

June 22, 1995

MANAGERS, HUMAN RESOURCES (ALL AREAS)  
MANAGERS, HUMAN RESOURCES (ALL DISTRICTS)  
SENIOR AREA MEDICAL DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: Documentation Requirements

It has recently come to my attention that there is some confusion in the field concerning the substance of medical information needed by a supervisor to approve leave pursuant to Section 513.36 of the Employee and Labor Relations Manual. The following restates the Postal Service's position.

When employees are required to submit medical documentation to support a request for approved leave, such documentation should be furnished by the employee's attending physician or other attending practitioner, with an explanation of the nature of the employee's illness or injury sufficient to indicate that the employee was or will be unable to perform his or her normal duties during the period of absence. Normally, statements such as "under my care" or "received treatment" are not acceptable evidence of incapacitation.

In order to return to duty when medical documentation is required, an employee must submit to the supervisor information from the appropriate medical source which includes:

1. Evidence of incapacitation for the period of absence.
2. Evidence of the ability to return to duty with or without limitations.

Medical information which includes a diagnosis and a medical prognosis is not necessary to approve leave. A health care provider can provide an explanation of medical facts sufficient to indicate that an employee is, or will be, incapacitated for duty without giving a specific diagnosis or medical prognosis. If medical documentation is received by an employee's supervisor that provides a diagnosis and a medical prognosis, it must be forwarded to the health unit or office of the contract medical provider and treated as a "restricted medical record" under Section 214.3 of Handbook EL-806.

In order to facilitate operational scheduling and planning, supervisors may request medical information relative to the duration of an absence, future absences, or an employee's future ability to perform the full duties of a position or duty assignment. Such information may be given to a supervisor by an employee or health care provider without divulging restricted medical information.



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