

**LAWS OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**

**TUBERCULOSIS CONTROL ACT**

**CHAPTER 28:51**

**Act**  
**26 of 1961**  
Amended by  
\*31 of 1980

\*See Note on Validation at page 2

**Current Authorised Pages**

<i>Pages</i> <i>(inclusive)</i>		<i>Authorised</i> <i>by L.R.O.</i>
1-2	..	1/1983
3-9	..	1/1980

**Note  
on  
Subsidiary Legislation**

This Chapter contains no subsidiary legislation.

**Note  
on  
Validation**

The Act of this Chapter was re-enacted with retrospective effect and all acts done under it validated by Act 31 of 1980.

**Note  
on  
Adaptation**

Under paragraph 6 of the Second Schedule to the Law Revision Act (Ch. 3:03) the Commission amended certain references to public officers in this Chapter. The Minister's approval of the amendments was signified by L.N. 52/1980, but no marginal reference is made to this Notice where any such amendment is made in the text.

**CHAPTER 28:51****TUBERCULOSIS CONTROL ACT****ARRANGEMENT OF SECTIONS****SECTION**

1. Short title.
2. Interpretation.
3. Admission and detention of patients.
4. Notification of cases of tuberculosis.
5. Regulations.
6. Medical officer may require examination.
7. Information or complaint.
8. Treatment of prisoners.
9. Authority of hospital director and medical officer of health.
10. How patient may leave hospital.
11. Transfer of patients.
12. Limitation of action.
13. Penalties.
14. Application to patients at the commencement of Act.

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**An Act to make provision for the treatment and care of persons suffering from Tuberculosis, and matters incidental thereto.** 26 of 1961.

[1ST JANUARY 1965]

Commencement.  
113/1964.

1. This Act may be cited as the Tuberculosis Control Act. Short title.

2. In this Act—

Interpretation.

“hospital” means a place used or designated under any law as a place for the treatment of tuberculosis and includes a part of a general or other hospital or other place that, with the approval of the Minister, is set aside for the care and treatment of patients;

“hospital director” means the thoracic medical director of a hospital;

“infectious tuberculosis” includes—

- (a) all cases of pulmonary tuberculosis that produce sputum containing tubercle bacilli or gastric washings containing tubercle bacilli; and

(b) all cases of tuberculosis other than the pulmonary form in which tubercle bacilli are found in the discharges from the diseased tissue;

Ch. 12 No. 4.  
(1950 Ed.).

“medical officer of health” has the same meaning as in the Public Health Ordinance;

“medical practitioner” means a member of the Medical Board of Trinidad and Tobago;

“patient” means a person who is suffering from or is suspected to be suffering from infectious tuberculosis and who has been admitted to a hospital under this Act;

“prescribed” means prescribed under the Regulations;

“prisoner” means an inmate of a prison, reformatory or industrial school or institution who is detained therein under sentence or conviction for any offence, or under any order of detention or under committal or remand pending trial or investigation on a charge for any offence.

Admission and  
detention of  
patients.

3. The hospital director may admit as a patient any person who is or is suspected to be suffering from infectious tuberculosis and may detain the patient for such time as in the opinion of the hospital director is necessary for the care and supervision of the patient either for his own protection or for the protection of others.

Notification of  
cases of  
tuberculosis.

4. Any medical practitioner who has reason to suspect that any person under his care is or may be suffering from tuberculosis, whether infectious or not, shall immediately complete the prescribed form of notification and forward it to the medical officer of health of the district.

Regulations.

5. (1) The Minister, after consultation with the Central Board of Health, may make such Regulations as are necessary for the suppression and control of tuberculosis and matters connected therewith in the interest of the public health, and, without restricting the generality of the foregoing, may make Regulations with respect to—

- (a) the compulsory notification of persons suffering or suspected to be suffering from tuberculosis;
- (b) the compulsory examination of persons known or suspected to be suffering from tuberculosis;
- (c) the conditions for compulsory treatment of persons suffering from tuberculosis;

- (d) the establishment of clinics and the compulsory attendance at clinics of persons suffering from tuberculosis, and the compulsory submission of those persons to such tests and examinations as may be required;
- (e) the compulsory removal to hospitals of persons suffering from tuberculosis, and the detention and treatment therein of those persons, and the conditions of discharge from hospital thereof;
- (f) the designation of special treatment units;
- (g) prescribing the forms relating to patients and their admission to, maintenance in, transfer, release and discharge from hospitals, and all other forms required for carrying out the provisions of this Act and the Regulations;
- (h) prescribing that the contravention of a specified regulation constitutes an offence against this Act.

(2) The Minister may, from time to time, declare all or any of the regulations not to be in force with respect to all hospitals or any specified hospital or hospitals for such time or times as he may deem expedient.

6. (1) Any medical officer of health may require any person who is resident in the municipality or district for which the medical officer of health is appointed, and who is suspected by the medical officer of health to be suffering from tuberculosis or who has been in contact with any person suffering from tuberculosis or who has been a patient in a hospital, to submit to such examination for tuberculosis as the medical officer of health directs.

Medical officer  
may require  
examination.

(2) In requiring any person to submit to an examination under this section, the medical officer of health shall serve or cause such person, or in the case of an infant, the parent or guardian of the infant, to be served with a notice in writing signed by the medical officer of health specifying the nature, time and place of the examination.

(3) Any person served with a notice who fails to carry out an order or direction contained therein is liable on summary conviction to a fine of three hundred dollars and upon conviction he may be committed to a hospital for a period of not more than fourteen days to receive the examination considered necessary by the thoracic medical director of the hospital to determine if the person is suffering from infectious tuberculosis.

Information or  
complaint.

7. (1) Any medical officer of health, hospital director or medical practitioner may make a complaint or lay an information in writing before a magistrate that the person named therein—

- (a) is suffering from infectious tuberculosis;
- (b) is unwilling or unable to conduct himself in such a manner as not to expose members of his family or other persons to danger of infection; and
- (c) refuses to be admitted to or to remain in a hospital or has left the hospital against the advice or without the knowledge of the hospital director.

(2) Upon receiving any such complaint or information, the magistrate shall issue a summons directed to the person named therein requiring him to appear at a time and place specified in the summons.

(3) Where the person to whom the summons is directed does not appear at the time and place specified therein, or where the summons cannot be served, the magistrate may issue a warrant directing that the person named in the summons be brought before him.

(4) Where the person named in the summons does not appear in person or by a representative, and the magistrate is satisfied that the person so named is too ill to appear or to be brought before him, he may make an order requiring that person to be admitted to a hospital and that magistrate or any other magistrate may hold any further hearings in respect of the matter in the hospital.

(5) Where a person appears or is brought before a magistrate pursuant to this section, the magistrate shall enquire into the matters charged in the information or complaint, and for such purpose shall proceed in the manner prescribed by the Summary Courts Act, and has all the powers of a magistrate holding a hearing under that Act.

Ch. 4:20.

- (6) Where a magistrate finds that any such person—
  - (a) is suffering from infectious tuberculosis;
  - (b) is unwilling or unable to conduct himself in such a manner as not to expose members of his family or other persons to danger of infection; and
  - (c) refuses to be admitted to or to remain in a hospital, or has left the hospital against the advice or without the knowledge of the hospital director,

the magistrate shall order that such person be admitted to and detained in a hospital for treatment and remain therein until discharged as provided under this Act.

(7) A person who appears or is summoned to appear before a magistrate under this section may retain a medical practitioner to give evidence on his behalf.

(8) A certificate signed or purporting to be signed by the director or other person in charge of a laboratory approved by the Minister as to the presence of tubercle bacilli in the sputum or in the gastric washings or in discharges from diseased tissues of any person named therein, shall be received in evidence in any inquiry under this section as *prima facie* proof of the facts stated herein and of the authority of the person giving such certificate without any proof of appointment or signature.

(9) A person detained pending a hearing under this section, or pending his removal to a hospital, shall be detained in a hospital or such other safe and comfortable place as the magistrate may direct.

(10) The Minister may direct the transfer of any person detained under this section to any hospital or other place when he deems such transfer to be necessary for the welfare of the patient or of other patients or persons.

8. (1) Where a prisoner is found to be suffering from infectious tuberculosis, the Minister may by order in writing direct that the prisoner be transferred to a hospital and undergo treatment therein and that he be detained in custody within the hospital until the tuberculosis is no longer infectious or until he has received a degree of treatment considered adequate by the hospital director, notwithstanding that that person may be otherwise entitled to be released.

Treatment of  
prisoners.

(2) An order made under this section is sufficient warrant to the person to whom the order is addressed to carry out the terms thereof; but if the prisoner so detained is otherwise entitled to be released the thoracic medical director of the hospital in which he is detained may arrange for his admission to and detention in any other hospital for the purpose of such treatment as the thoracic medical director may consider necessary.

(3) If a prisoner is ordered to be discharged from the hospital, the Minister shall, if the term of imprisonment or detention of the prisoner has not yet expired, remit the prisoner to the prison, reformatory or industrial institution in which he might have been

detained if he had not been so transferred; and a prisoner so remitted shall be dealt with as if he had not been transferred under subsection (1) but had remained in the prison, reformatory or industrial institution from which he was so transferred.

(4) In this section "Minister" means the Minister responsible for National Security.

Authority of Superintendent and medical officer of health.

9. The hospital director or any person designated by him, any medical officer of health or any person designated by him, or any constable, may—

- (a) execute any warrant and enforce any order of a magistrate issued or made under this Act;
- (b) bring any person before a magistrate under section 7;
- (c) apprehend without warrant any person who has left a hospital in contravention of any order made under this Act or who has not been discharged therefrom or permitted to leave as is provided by this Act.

How patient may leave a hospital.

10. (1) No patient shall leave a hospital until he is discharged therefrom by the hospital director.

(2) Notwithstanding subsection (1), the hospital director may permit a patient to leave a hospital for such period and under such terms and conditions as the hospital director may determine, but he shall not permit a patient to leave a hospital until he is satisfied that suitable arrangements have been made for the care and supervision of the patient and that the patient may leave without danger to himself or to others.

(3) The hospital director may require as a condition of a patient's release that the patient report to a clinic or hospital or other approved facility; and while so absent from the hospital the patient shall be deemed to be detained under the authority of this Act as if he had remained in the hospital.

Transfer of patients.

11. The thoracic medical director of a hospital may direct the transfer of any patient in that hospital to any public or private surgical hospital or other appropriate place, for the purpose of having performed upon the patient any surgical operation for any condition other than tuberculosis; and in any such case the charges for the treatment in a public hospital of any such patient who is indigent shall be paid for in the same manner as charges for indigent patients are paid.

12. No action against a hospital or any nurse or person employed therein for damages for injury caused by negligence in the admission, care, treatment or discharge of any patient may be brought later than six months after the patient is discharged from or ceases to receive treatment at that hospital. Limitation of action.

13. Any person who contravenes a provision of any regulation, the contravention of which is specified in the Regulations as constituting an offence against this Act, is liable on summary conviction to a penalty of one thousand five hundred dollars. Penalties.

14. All patients who are in a hospital at the date of the commencement of this Act or who have been conditionally released therefrom as provided under section 10 are subject to the provisions of this Act. Application to patients at the commencement of Act.

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