



**ጤና ሚኒስቴር - ኢትዮጵያ**  
**Ministry of Health - Ethiopia**  
**የዜጎች ጤና ለሀገር ብልጽግና!**  
**Healthier Citizens for Prosperous Nation**

## **MINISTRY OF HEALTH**

# **Abroad Medical Service Referral System Implementation Directive No. 1128/2026**

**April, 2026**

**Addis Ababa,**

**FDRE Ministry of Health Directive No. 1128/2026**

**Abroad Medical Service Referral System Implementation Directive**

Whereas, it has become necessary to establish a legal framework that ensures Ethiopian citizens who travel abroad for medical treatment to receive quality, safe, and dignified health care services;  
Whereas, it has become necessary to establish a uniform system for the implementation of abroad medical referrals at the national level, with the objective of minimizing unnecessary patient suffering and ensuring the provision of comprehensive medical services essential for treatment;  
Whereas, it has become necessary to establish a system for the certification of competence for institutions that sends a patient who needs abroad medical service or connects them with a foreign medical institution;

Now, therefore, the Ministry of Health has issued this directive in accordance with Article 11(3) and Article 58(2) of the Health Service Administration and regulation Proclamation No. 1362/2017.

**SECTION ONE**  
**GENERAL PROVISIONS**

**1. Short Title**

This Directive may be cited as “**Abroad Medical Service Referral System Implementation Directive No. 1128/2026**”

**2. Definitions**

In this Directive, unless the context requires otherwise:

1/ “Hospital” means a health institution designated as a comprehensive specialized hospital or a higher-tier hospital by a legally authorized body, or, in the absence of such, a general hospital selected by the Bureau;

2/ “Patient” means a person who travels abroad to obtain medical services based on a board certificate;

3/ “Treating Physician” means a specialist or sub-specialist who is trained in the specific field of medicine directly related to the illness for which the patient is receiving treatment;

4/ “Abroad Medical Service Referral” means the system through which the Ministry facilitates the transfer of a patient from a domestic health facility to a foreign health institution to receive medical services;

5/ “Board” means a body established by the Medical Director of a hospital, mandated to issue a medical board certificate that a patient should be treated abroad;

6/ “Board Certificate” means a medical document issued by the Board, certifying that the patient requires abroad medical service;

7/“Permission Certificate” means an official document issued by the Ministry to permit the patient to receive medical treatment abroad, based on the medical document submitted to the Board.

8/ “Agent” means a person who send a patient who needs abroad medical service or connect them with a foreign health institution and has obtain a certificate of competence from the Ministry to

perform such functions;

9/ “Bureau” means a Regional Health Bureau or appropriate body empowered by law responsible for ensuring the implementation of the abroad medical referral system;

10/ “Region” means any Region referred to under Article 47 of the Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and includes the Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa City Administrations;

11/ “Proclamation” means the Health Services Administration and regulation Proclamation No. 1362/2017;

12/ /Definitions in the proclamation shall also apply to this Directive;

13/ Any expression in the masculine gender shall include the feminine gender.

### **3. Scope of Application**

This Directive shall be applicable to activities undertaken for the implementation of the Abroad medical service referral system and to a person involved in the performance of such activities.

## **SECTION TWO**

### **ABROAD MEDICAL SERVICE REFERRAL SYSTEM**

#### **4. Conditions for Abroad Medical Service**

1/ Any patient shall obtain medical evidence and permission from the Ministry to get treatment abroad, if his health problem is beyond the capacity of the country’s health service.

2/ A patient may obtain authorization for abroad medical service from the Ministry where the following conditions are met:

- a) The required medical treatment cannot be provided within the country due to the unavailability of appropriate medical diagnostic equipment; the absence of a specialist or sub specialist capable of providing the required medical service; or a determination by the Appropriate body that the transfer of biological samples abroad for diagnostic is not feasible;
- b) Notwithstanding the provisions of Sub-Article (2) (a) of this Article, waiting period to obtain such service is excessively long, and the Board determines that delay in receiving treatment may result in irreversible harm to the patient’s health or lead to death, and when the Ministry approves; or
- c) Where the patient presents a certificate from the health institution indicating that he has medical follow-up appointment abroad for treatment previously started outside the country, and when the Board determines that it is medically appropriate for the patient to travel for

such follow-up.

## **5. Documents Required to Access Medical Services Abroad**

1/ A patient who request permission to receive medical services abroad shall submit the following documents to the Ministry:

- a) A valid and renewed Kebele Identification Card or National Digital ID or Ethiopian Passport;
- b) For applicants under 18 years of age, a National Digital ID or Birth Certificate;
- c) A complete Medical Board Certificate that does not exceed six months;
- d) An official bank document verifying a minimum deposit of Five Hundred Thousand (500,000) Ethiopian Birr in the patient's account;
- e) Service fees receipt.

2/ Without prejudice to Sub-Article (1)(a)-(e) of this Article, a patient seeking authorization for transplantation treatment shall, in addition, submit the following documents:

- a) A document issued by the relevant authority confirming a formal agreement between the recipient and the donor;
- b) A document verifying that the donor has undergone the required medical and health examinations;
- c) An official bank document showing a minimum balance of One Million (1,000,000) Ethiopian Birr in the patient's account.

3/ Notwithstanding the provisions of Sub-Article (1) (d) and Sub-Article (2) (c) of this Article;

- a) If a formal letter addressed to the Ministry from the employing institution, undertaking to cover all medical expenses of the patient; or
- b) If the cost of treatment is to be covered by a sponsor residing abroad and a valid visa sent to the patient ;
- c) If legally registered organization located abroad, undertaking responsibility for covering the medical expenses and a formal letter submitted to the Ministry. Or
- d) If Government organization or legally registered organization located within the country.

4/ The permission certificate issued by the Ministry remains valid for a period of six months only.

5/ Notwithstanding the provisions of Sub-Article (1) and (2) of this Article, if the permission certificate issued by the Ministry has been expired for six months, the patient may request the renewal of permission certificate by submitting the following documents:

- a) The previous permission certificate issued by the Ministry, and expired six months ago;

b) A legally certified document explaining the reasons for not using the previously issued permission certificate within the six-month period;

c) A renewed Medical Board Certificate;

d) A document certifying that foreign currency has not been withdrawn from the bank.

6/ Without prejudice to Sub-Articles (1) and (2) of this Article, where the permission certificate issued by the Ministry has been lost, the patient shall submit an official police report attesting to the loss of the document and may obtain replacement permission certificate.

#### **6. Patient Attendant**

1/ The Board is required to approve one attendant to accompany a patient permitted for medical treatment abroad.

2/ Notwithstanding the provisions of Sub-Article (1) of this Article, the Board may permit up to two attendants where the health condition of the patient is so necessitated.

3/ Notwithstanding the provisions of Sub-Article (1) of this Article, a patient under the age of eighteen (18) years shall be accompanied by a parent or legal tutor.

4/ Where an attendant previously approved to accompany a patient is unable to travel, the Ministry may, upon receipt of a valid justification, approve the replacement of the attendant.

### **SECTION THREE**

#### **CERTIFICATE OF COMPETENCE**

#### **7. Application For Issuance of a Certificate of Competence and the Conditions that have to be Fulfilled**

1/ Any person intending to act as an agent shall obtain a certificate of competence from the Ministry.

2/ In accordance with sub-article (1) of this article, a certificate of competency shall be issued to a person who is a health professional

3/ To obtain a certificate of competence, the applicant shall complete the application form prepared for this purpose and submit it along with the following information of the applicant:

a) A valid and renewed Kebele Identification Card, National Digital ID, or Passport stating the identity and address of the applicant;

b) A valid professional license demonstrating that the applicant is a health professional ;

c) Service fees receipt;

d) A document verifying that the foreign health institution with which the applicant is affiliated

possesses a valid work permit, duly certified by the Ethiopia Ministry of Foreign Affairs;

e) A document demonstrating that the foreign health institution providing medical services to patients abroad is a duly registered legal entity within in the country;

f) A valid International or National Quality Certificate for the medical services rendered by the foreign institution, authenticated by the Ethiopia Ministry of Foreign Affairs; and

g) A contractual agreement signed with the Ministry governing the facilitation of foreign medical treatment services.

4/ The Ministry shall issue a certificate of competence within five working days from the date of submission of the application; if it is denied it shall give in written reason for denial and also inform the applicant that he has the right to request reconsideration if he has a complaint.

5/ The Agent is required to display the issued certificate of competence prominently within the workplace.

#### **8. Contents of the Certificate Of Competence**

The Certificate of Competence issued to an Agent shall contain the particulars specified under Annex 4 of this Directive.

#### **9. Renewal of Certificate of Competence**

1/ Any Agent shall renew the Certificate of Competence yearly.

2/ Any Agent must apply for a Certificate of Competence renewal one month before the expiration of that certificate.

3/ To renew a certificate of competence, the Agent shall complete the application form prepared for this purpose and submit it along with the following information of the applicant:

a) A renewed Kebele ID, National Digital ID (Fida ID), or Passport verifying the identity and address of the applicant.

b) Service fees receipt;

c) The previously issued Certificate of Competence;

d) A valid contractual agreement signed with the Ministry concerning the facilitation of abroad medical treatment.

4/ Failure to renew the Certificate of Competence within the time limits specified under Sub-Articles (1) and (2) of this Article shall result in the certificate being renewed only upon payment of the penalty prescribed by the relevant law.

#### **10. Amendment of the Certificate of Competence**

A Certificate of Competence may be amended under any of the following circumstances:

- 1/ Where the agent or the foreign health institution makes a change to the list of medical services provided; or
- 2/ Where the contractual agreement signed with the Ministry concerning the facilitation of abroad medical treatment has been amended.

#### **11. Granting Replacement of Certificate of Competence**

- 1/ Any agent whose Certificate of Competence has been damaged, lost, or destroyed may apply for a replacement.
- 2/ Any agent to get a Certificate of Competence replacement shall fulfill the following conditions:
  - a) If Certificate of Competence is damaged, should return;
  - b) If Certificate of Competence is lost or fire should bring confirmation from justice entities; and
  - c) Service fees receipt.
- 3/ The Ministry shall be responsible for issuing a replacement Certificate of Competence to an agent who fulfils all the requirements stipulated under Sub Article (2) of this article.

### **SECTION FOUR**

#### **THE MEDICAL BOARD**

#### **12. Establishment of the Board**

- 1/ A Medical Board shall be established by the Medical Director of the respective hospital.
- 2/ Members of the Board shall be selected based on their professional qualifications, relevant experience, ethical conduct, and specialty or subspecialty expertise.
- 3/ The Board shall consist of not less than three (3) and not more than five (5) members.
- 4/ The Chairperson of the Board shall be appointed by the Medical Director of the hospital.
- 5/ The Board shall meet once a week; provided however, that it meets at any time at the call of the chairperson or at the request of one-third of its members.
- 6/ There shall be a quorum when half of the members of the Board are present at a meeting.
- 7/ Decisions of the Board shall be passed by majority vote; In case of a tie, the Chairperson's opinion shall constitute the decision of the Board.
- 8/ The hospital shall develop rules of procedure governing the functions of the Board, including the terms of board membership, decision-making processes, and other detailed operational matters, consistent with the provisions of this Directive.

### **13. Removal of Board Membership**

A member of the Board may be removed from Board membership for the following reasons:

- 1/ Where a conflict of interest arises;
- 2/ due to health or ethical problems;
- 3/ Where the member has been convicted of a criminal offense;
- 4/ Where the member ceases employment at the institution to which the Board is affiliated; or
- 5/ For failure to be present at three consecutive meetings of the Board without any permission or prior notification and failure to improve such conduct following a written warning.

### **14. Management of Conflict of Interest**

Any Board member who has a direct or indirect conflict of interest in relation to a matter under consideration by the Board shall immediately disclose such conflict to the Board and recuse himself from Board meetings where the issue is being discussed.

## **SECTION FIVE**

### **FUNCTION AND RESPONSIBILITY OF THE RELEVANT BODIES**

### **15. Function and Responsibilities of the Ministry**

The Ministry shall have the following functions and responsibilities:

- 1/ Verify and approve medical board certificates submitted by hospitals and Bureau;
- 2/ Establish procedural system for the implementation of the abroad medical referral system monitor and evaluate its implementation;
- 3/ Prepare forms required for the implementation of the foreign medical referral process and distribute them to relevant hospitals;
- 4/ Issue certificate permission to patients to travel abroad for medical treatment based on the board certificate and in accordance with Annex 2 and 3 of this Directive;
- 5/ Issue, renew, suspend, or revoke a Certificate of Competence for agents in accordance with the provisions of this Directive;
- 6/ Verify the status of foreign health institutions providing medical services, including conducting on-site inspections when deemed necessary, in accordance with Article 21 of this Directive;
- 7/ Establish and maintain a national medical service database and ensure its accessibility to relevant stakeholders; and
- 8/ Perform other related activities associated with the issuance of abroad medical certificate.

#### **16. Function and Responsibilities of the Treating Physician**

The treating physician shall have the following functions and responsibilities;

- 1/ Confirm that the required medical treatment cannot be provided within the country and that the illness is not curable domestically with available resources;
- 2/ Provide the patient with clear information regarding the reasons for referral abroad and the expected treatment outcomes, supported by medical evidence;
- 3/ Ensure that the patient completes and signs a consent form acknowledging agreement to receive treatment abroad; and
- 4/ Submit all patient relevant medical evidence to the Board within three (3) working days.

#### **17. Function and Responsibilities of the Medical Board**

The Board shall have the following functions and responsibilities with respect to the referral of patients for medical treatment abroad:

- 1/ Review the medical evidence submitted by the treating physician and render a decision within ten (10) working days of receipt;
- 2/ Submit the Board's decision to the Medical Director for approval within three (3) working days of the decision; and
- 3/ Ensure that the medical evidence transmitted to the Medical Director in accordance with Sub-Article (2) of this Article is duly signed by not less than three (3) Board members, in accordance with annex 1 of this Directive.

#### **18. Function and Responsibilities of An Expert Responsible for Verifying Board Certificate**

An expert responsible for verifying the board certificate issued by the hospital's medical director to the office or ministry shall have the following functions and responsibilities:

- 1/ Verify that the patient was referred from a hospital is unable to provide the required service;
- 2/ Confirm that all medical evidence and supporting documents are complete; and
- 3/ Ensure that all forms are duly completed, signed, and authenticated by the appropriate professionals and shall certify the accuracy of the names and signatures.

#### **19. Function and Responsibilities of the Medical Director**

The Medical Director shall have the following functions and responsibilities:

- 1/ Verify that the medical documentation submitted in accordance with Article 17(3) of this Article is complete.
- 2/ Approve the medical documentation that has validated according to Sub-Article (1) of this Article.

3/ Send the approved Board certificate to the Ministry or Bureau within three (3) working days.

**20. Function and Responsibilities of the Bureau**

The Bureau shall have the following Functions and responsibilities:

- 1/ Verify and approve the Board certificate submitted by the Medical Director of the hospital;
- 2/ Send the approved Board certificate to the Ministry;
- 3/ Provide the necessary support for the digitization of the referral service; and
- 4/ Strengthen and modernizes the information management system.

**21. Function and Responsibilities of the Hospital**

The Hospital shall have the following Functions and responsibilities:

- 1/ Only hospitals designated as comprehensive specialized or higher-tier hospitals by a legally authorized body, or, in the absence of such, a general hospital selected by the Bureau, may issue foreign medical referral board certificate;
- 2/ Immediately submit to the Ministry or Office the names and specimen signatures of all current Board members;
- 3/ Ensure that the Board certificate is duly verified by the institution's Board;
- 4/ Ensure that the Medical Director verified the Board certificate and are sent promptly to the Ministry or Bureau;
- 5/ Immediately report to the Ministry any change in the member of the Board; and
- 6/ Strictly adhere to and implement the procedures and standards established by the Ministry.

**22. Function and Responsibilities of the Agent**

Agent shall have the following functions and responsibilities:

- 1/ Provide all requested evidence and documentation related to a foreign health institution when required by the Ministry;
- 2/ Facilitate and support the patient throughout the duration of treatment abroad, including assistance within and outside the hospital;
- 3/ when the foreign health institution that has received the patient declines to provide treatment for any reason, the agent is required to inform the Ministry of the notification issued by the hospital within one working day of its receipt.
- 4/ Provide any medical information related to the patient's case upon the Ministry's request;
- 5/ Submit a quarterly performance report to the Ministry detailing the status of patients and services rendered; and
- 6/ Oblige to provide compensation to the patient for the poor of standard of medical care,

medical errors, professional negligence, and related actions.

## **SECTION SIX**

### **ADMINISTRATIVE MEASURE AND GRIEVANCE REDRESSAL SYSTEM**

#### **ADMINISTRATIVE MEASURE**

##### **23. Administrative Measure**

If any Agent commits an offense that entails a written warning, suspension, or revocation, the Ministry shall take appropriate administrative action.

##### **24. Offenses Warranting A Written Warning**

If an agent is found guilty for any of the following reasons, the Ministry may issue a written warning:

- 1/ Failure to display the Certificate of Competence prominently at the workplace;
- 2/ Failure to submit periodic performance reports as required;
- 3/ Failure to provide documentation or evidence requested by the Ministry in relation to service delivery;
- 4/ Failure to maintain proper documentation or records related to foreign medical referral activities;
- 5/ Failure to present records for inspection upon request;
- 6/ Failure to provide the necessary assistance to a patient, in accordance with Article 22(2) of this Directive;
- 7/ Provide misleading or exaggerated information regarding foreign health institution to the patients; or
- 8/ Commit other related offences.

##### **25. Offenses Resulting Suspension of The Certificate of Competence**

1/ If an agent is found guilty of any of the following reasons, the Ministry may suspend the Certificate of Competence:

- a) More than twice a written warning and found without proper corrections;
- b) Engage in activities beyond the scope of the issued certificate of competence;
- c) In the event of complaint lodge against the agent, till the ministry decides on the matter;
- d) Failure to renew the Certificate of Competence within the time limit specified under Article 9(2) of this Directive;
- e) In the event of a breach that may lead to cancellation of certificate of competence, till the

matter shall be refer to the ministry and get decision ;or

f) Commit other related offences.

2/ Suspension shall be imposed for a period of not less than six (6) months and not more than two (2) years, as deemed appropriate by the Ministry.

## **26. Offenses Leading to Cancellation of the Certificate of Competence**

1/ If an agent is found guilty of any of the following reasons, the Ministry may cancel the Certificate of Competence:

a) If the agent Provide services violating the sanction imposed under Article 25(2) of this Directive.

b) In the event that the services rendered by a foreign health institution or agent are terminated.

c) if the ministry confirmed that the medical service render by foreign health institution is substandard or underqualified.

d) In the event that a foreign health institution requests the termination of a contractual agreement.

e) In the event that the quality of medical care provided to the patient is found to be substandard, and it is established that a medical error or professional negligence has occurred;

f) If it is confirmed that the certificate of competence was obtained by submitting forged documents;

g) Failure to renew the certificate of competence within the period specified under Article 9(4) of this Directive;

h) If the agent illegally acts under the guise of his certificate of competence or participates in an illegal activity,

i) If the agent has been suspended and has not taken corrective action within the period specified under Article 25(2) of this Directive;

j) If he has committed another misconduct that may result in suspension within one year of being suspended according to Article 25 of this directive;

k) Commit other related offences.

2/ A person whose certificate of competence has been revoked may reapply for a new certificate of competence one year after the date of revocation of the certificate of competence unless punished under criminal law.

3/ Notwithstanding Sub-Article (2) of this article, if the reason for the revocation is

stated in paragraph (b) and (d) of Sub-Article (1) of this article, he can reapply for a new certificate of competence at any time.

**27. Return of Certificate**

Any agent whose Certificate of Competence has been suspended, revoked, or who has voluntarily ceased his operations, shall be obliged to return the certificate to the Ministry within ten (10) working days.

**28. Complaint and Grievance Redressal System**

1/ Any person pursuant to this Directive against whom an administrative decision is made has the right to lodge a complaint to the Agency.

2/ The Higher official Agency that receives the complaint pursuant to Sub-Article (2) of this Article shall render decision.

**PART SEVEN**

**MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS**

**29. Obligation to Cooperate**

1/ All Person subject to this Directive shall be obliged to cooperate fully in the implementation of its provisions.

2/ Any person found in violation of this Directive shall be held liable under the applicable law.

**30. Inapplicable Directives**

Any directive or practice inconsistent with this Directive shall be inapplicable with respect to matters covered under this directive.

**31. Effective Date**

This directive shall enter into force on the day of its registration with the Ministry Justice and its uploading on the official website of the Ministry of Health.

**Done at Addis Ababa, April, 2026**

**Mekdes Daba (PhD)**

**Minister of Ministry of Health**