

Department of the Interior,

OFFICE OF INDIAN AFFAIRS,

WASHINGTON, D. C., ~~APRIL 30, 1876.~~

INSTRUCTIONS RELATING TO MEDICAL SUPPLIES.

July 12, 1877

Estimates for Medical Supplies must be made in *duplicate*, upon blanks furnished for that purpose, which are to be transmitted to this Office; and a third copy should be retained as a part of the records of the agency.

The supply called for in the estimate should be for the period of twelve months corresponding with the fiscal year.

The blank furnished for *Estimates for Medical Supplies* is based upon that produced by army experience. The list embraces many articles not needed at many, perhaps most, of the Indian Agencies.

There is no branch of the Government where the medical requirements cover such a varied experience as in the Indian Service. The range is from the wildest tribes, depending solely upon the superstitious mysteries and incantations of their native "medicine men" to the fairly civilized Indian who relies entirely upon the "white man's" remedies.

Under present circumstances no uniform supply table can be devised which will be applicable alike to all cases, but much must be left to the discretion and experience of the several agency physicians. This remark must be made to apply to the quantities of the several articles as well as to the kind of articles needed.

While it is true that articles, proved by the experience of ages to be useful remedies, have a like effect upon the human system whether in the savage or civilized condition, yet it is believed that, as a general rule, remedies for this service should be few and simple, and that due attention should be given to recommending and insisting upon proper sanitary observances. The families of agents and employes are entitled to and should command the best medical skill, and receive the benefit of effective remedial agents.

Another difficulty in the way of establishing any list of articles for any service resides in the recognized fact that different physicians find by experience a relatively different value in the same articles. This, under certain surroundings and limited means, is apt to run to that excess which is termed routine practice.

Local influences tending to induce or develop a class of diseases requiring special remedies, will suggest to the physician the necessity for calling for apparently unusual quantities of some article or articles, and in such cases the reasons for his action should be stated.

The blank is sufficiently plain to be understood. To avoid the possibility of any mistakes, however, it is here stated that the column under the head of "ON HAND" should be filled by stating the amount of each and every article of which there is any on hand, whether any more is wanted or not; and the column under the head of "NEEDED" should be filled by placing the amount of each article wanted *in addition to what is on hand*.

When any article is called for of which there is none "on hand," the latter fact should be made known by placing a cypher (0) in the appropriate place. At agencies where there is no physician at the time of making up the estimate, the agent should use the blank in calling for a brief list of common remedies, such as he or some person connected with the agency can safely administer in simple cases.

Upon the reception of the *Estimates* at this Office they will be carefully examined, and, so far as approved, the supplies will be forwarded to the several agencies with an invoice of the same. On their arrival the agent will direct the agency physician to examine the supplies, comparing them with the invoice, and prepare a receipt in duplicate for transmittal to this Office. In his letter transmitting this receipt in duplicate, the agent should give any statements relative to the subject which he may deem of importance or interest.

Returns of Medical Supplies.—That part of the quarterly returns of property on hand and to be accounted for, which relates to medical supplies, will hereafter be made upon the blanks furnished for that purpose. These returns are to be made promptly, at the close of each quarter, by the physician to the agent, who will examine the same, and when approved by him will be forwarded to this Office.

Upon the correctness of the returns of this class of property the agent must of course rely largely upon the physician, but the agent should give the same careful consideration and satisfy himself in the premises, as the agent is the bonded officer who is held responsible in the case.

J. Q. SMITH,

Commissioner.

Circular relative to
Medical Supplies Ord.
Feb 28-97