
WEST VIRGINIA CODE CHAPTER 16
ARTICLE 4

WV Legislature

§16-4-1. Diseases designated as sexually transmitted.

Sexually transmitted diseases, as designated by the secretary of the Department of Health in rules proposed for legislative approval in accordance with the provisions of article three, chapter twenty-nine-a of this code, are declared to be infectious, contagious, communicable and dangerous to the public health. If a conflict exists between a provision of this article and a provision of article three-c of this chapter, the provision of article three-c prevails.

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§16-4-2. Investigations by local health officers.

(a) All municipal and county health officers shall:

(1) Use every available means to ascertain the existence of, and to investigate all cases of sexually transmitted disease coming within their respective jurisdictions and, when it is necessary, have all cases treated, if they are not already under treatment;

(2) To ascertain the sources and transmission of the infection; and

(3) To institute measures for the protection of other persons from infection by the infected person, or from persons reasonably suspected of being so infected, and for the protection of the public health at all times.

(b) A municipal health officer may designate any member of the city police or health department to make any investigation required by the provisions of this section. A county health officer may designate any discreet person to make any investigation required by the provisions of this section. Any person conducting an investigation has all authority necessary for the purpose, the same as the health officer.

§16-4-3. Medical clinics and detention houses.

In order to carry out the provisions of the last section, any health officer may, if he be a municipal health officer, with the consent of the municipal council or other body having proper authority, or if he be a county health officer, with the consent of the county commissioners or other tribunal, establish, either independently or in cooperation with other agencies, one or more medical clinics within their respective jurisdictions, and may also, with like consent, establish or provide one or more places for detention and quarantine of such persons as may come within the purview of this article.

§16-4-4. Evidence of infection.

The following are prima facie grounds and reasons for suspecting that a person is infected with a sexually transmitted disease:

- (a) Being a person who has been convicted in any court, or before a police judge, or before a magistrate, upon any charge growing out of sexual behavior;
- (b) Being a person reported by a physician as infected with a sexually transmitted disease, where the person is afterwards reported as having failed to return for treatment; and
- (c) Being a person designated in a sexually transmitted disease report as having a sexual exposure to the infected person reported.

§16-4-5. Examination of convicts; liability for expenses.

When any person has been tried and convicted in any police court, or in any criminal or circuit court, or before a justice of the peace, upon any charge or offense growing out of sex immorality, such as has been set out in the last preceding section, said person shall not be released from custody by the judge, justice, or police officer trying the case until the local health officer having proper jurisdiction has been notified and has had time to make all necessary tests and examinations to ascertain whether in fact such person is infected with a venereal disease, and all necessary expenses for holding such person in custody pending examination and treatment, if needed, shall be a proper charge against the municipality, if the offense was committed within it, or against the county in which the offense was committed, if committed outside of a municipality; and every municipality, whether it be a county seat or not, shall be liable under this section.

§16-4-6. Reports by physicians.

(a) Every practicing physician or other person who makes a diagnosis in or treats a case of sexually transmitted disease and every superintendent or manager of a hospital, dispensary or charitable or penal institution in which there is a case of sexually transmitted disease shall make two reports of the case, as follows:

(1) One report shall be made to the local municipal health officer, if the party for whom the diagnosis was made or case treated lives within any municipality having a health officer, and if the municipality has no health officer, or if the party lives outside of a municipality, then to the health officer of the county in which the person lives;

(2) The second report shall be made to the director of health of the state.

(b) The reports required by this section shall state: (1) The street number and address of the person reported as diseased; (2) the age, sex, color, race, marital state and occupation of the person; (3) the date of the onset of the disease; (4) the anatomical site of the infection and the date and type of treatment; and (5) persons having a sexual exposure to the infected person reported, if any are identified by the infected person. The reports shall be mailed or delivered to the parties to whom they are directed within the specifications and time frame established by the director pursuant to rules proposed for legislative approval in accordance with the provisions of article three, chapter twenty-nine-a of this code.

(c) Municipal and county health officers shall file and preserve the reports required by this section: Provided, That all records, reports and other information provided under this section shall be confidential and exempt from public disclosure under the provisions of chapter twenty-nine-b of this code: Provided, however, That all reports shall be open to inspection by the director of the division of health, and by local health officers, or officers whose duties are connected with executing the laws against these diseases: Provided further, That any person who knowingly and willfully divulges or discloses any information entitled to protection under this section is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction thereof, shall be fined not more than \$5,000, or imprisoned in the county jail for not more than one year, or both fined and imprisoned: And provided further, That the department shall propose regulations relating hereto for approval by the Legislature in accordance with article three, chapter twenty-nine-a and such regulations shall include, but not be limited to, provisions for the implementation of the confidentiality provisions pertaining to this section.

§16-4-7. False report or information.

Any physician or other person required to make reports of a venereal disease hereunder, or who is required to report the failure of any patient to return for further treatment, who fails or refuses to make any such reports, or who knowingly reports a person under a false or fictitious name or address, or who makes any other statements on any report which he has reason to believe are untrue, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, shall be punished as hereinafter provided; and each report that should have been made, and each name that should have been given, and each address that should have been given, or has been wrongfully reported or given, shall be a separate offense; and a second conviction of a physician for failure to comply with any provision of this section shall be sufficient ground and reason for the director of health, upon the recommendation of the medical licensing board, to revoke the license of such physician. Any person suffering with a venereal disease, whose name is required to be reported hereunder, who gives to the physician or person required to make reports herein required a false or fictitious name or address, or who shall fail or refuse to answer any proper question required to be reported hereunder, or who makes any false statement in answer to any such question, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, shall be punished as hereinafter provided.

§16-4-8. Blanks and fees for reports.

It shall be the duty of the local health officers to furnish report blanks to physicians or other persons who need them, for the purpose of making reports required to be made to them, and of the director of the bureau of venereal diseases to furnish blanks for reports to be made to the said bureau; and counties and municipalities may, if they choose, pay persons, for making such reports as are to be made to county and municipal health officers, the sum of not to exceed 25¢ for each report so made.

§16-4-9. Treatment.

(a) Every physician or other person who examines or treats a person having a sexually transmitted disease shall instruct the person in measures for preventing the spread of the disease, and to inform him or her of the necessity of taking treatment until cured. (b) Any person who has been examined and found infected, or is being treated for a sexually transmitted disease as provided by this section, shall follow the directions given by the treating physician or other person and take precautions as are necessary and are recommended. Any person starting to take treatment shall continue the treatment until discharged by the physician or other person treating him or her.

(c) Any infected person who fails to return for further treatment within ten days after the last date set by the physician or other person for the patient to return for further treatment, without lawful excuse therefor, is guilty of a misdemeanor and, shall be punished as provided in section twenty-six of this article.

(d) After the expiration of the ten days provided in subsection (c) of this section, the physician or other person to whom the patient should have returned for treatment shall, unless he or she has knowledge of good reasons why the patient failed to return, make a report of the facts in the case to the local health officer having proper jurisdiction. The local health officer shall at once make an investigation to ascertain why the patient failed to return, and shall take any steps necessary in the matter to protect the public health, including obtaining the arrest, detention and quarantine of the patient.

§16-4-10. Minors.

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, any licensed physician may examine, diagnose, or treat any minor with his or her consent for any venereal disease without the knowledge or consent of the minor's parent or guardian. The physician shall not incur any civil or criminal liability in connection therewith except for negligence or wilful injury.

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§16-4-11. Precautions as to exposure to disease.

Whenever any attending physician or other person knows or has good reasons to believe that any person having a sexually transmitted disease is conducting himself or herself, or is about to conduct himself or herself, in a manner as to expose other persons to infection, the physician or other person shall at once notify the local health officer having jurisdiction of the facts in the case, giving the name and address of the person. The local health officer, upon receipt of the notice, shall at once cause an investigation to be made to ascertain what should be done in the premises, and may do whatever is necessary to protect the public health.

§16-4-12. Persons not under treatment.

Where a venereal disease report shows the person is suffering with such disease in an infectious stage, and is not under treatment, the local health officer shall at once investigate and ascertain whether such person so reported is conducting so as to expose others to infection, and shall take such action as is necessary to protect the public health, and may arrest, detain and quarantine such person if necessary.

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§16-4-13. Sources of infection.

Whenever it shall appear from any venereal disease report made by a physician, or other person, or otherwise, or whenever other reasonable facts are brought to the attention of any local health officer having proper jurisdiction which show that any hotel, boardinghouse, rooming house, or other house, place or thing is the source of infection of a venereal disease, without such report or other facts showing the particular person or thing therein as the source of such infection, then the local health officer shall at once notify the owner, proprietor or person operating, running or managing said hotel, boardinghouse, rooming house, or other house, or place, of the essential facts in the case; and if the place reported as being the source of such infection be a place or house, commonly reputed in the neighborhood to be a house or place of prostitution, or house or place of like character or kind, or is commonly known to be such by the police of the city (if in any municipality), then the proprietor, manager or operator of such house and all the inmates therein shall be apprehended and dealt with the same as other persons are arrested, detained, examined, quarantined, and treated, if found infected with a venereal disease.

§16-4-14. Issuance of warrant or order as to custody.

Upon receipt of a written report or of any other reliable information by the local health officer that any person infected with a venereal disease in an infectious stage is conducting himself or herself, or is about to conduct himself or herself, so as to infect others, or expose others to infection; or that a person infected with a venereal disease under treatment; or that any person is a prostitute, or person associating with prostitutes, and is reasonably suspected of being infected, or of conducting himself or herself so as to infect others; or that a person has been convicted in any court or municipality, or before a justice of the peace, of an offense growing out of sex immorality; or that a person is being held by any court, municipality, or justice of the peace, pending an examination for a venereal disease; or that a certain person has been reported in a venereal disease report as the source of a venereal disease; or when any other facts are brought to the attention of the local health officer having proper jurisdiction, showing that any person is reasonably suspected of being infected with a venereal disease, or is about to conduct himself or herself so as to infect others, said health officer shall at once issue his warrant or order, if the party be not already in custody, and shall proceed as hereinafter provided.

§16-4-15. Form and execution of warrant.

(a) Any warrant or order issued pursuant to the provisions of section fourteen of this article shall be directed to the chief of police if within a municipality, or to the county sheriff if not in a municipality or to any other officer qualified to execute process, directing the officer to apprehend the person mentioned, and to bring him or her before the health officer at a time and place set out in the warrant or order, there to be further dealt with as provided by law. The officer to whom the warrant is directed shall execute the warrant in the same manner as other papers of like character or kind.

(b) Pending a hearing in the matter the officer may for safekeeping, lodge the person apprehended under warrant, in jail or in any other place of detention that has been provided for such persons. The health officer may at his or her discretion and by indorsement on the warrant at the time of its issuance, direct any other disposition to be made of the person arrested, before trial. The officer executing the warrant shall be guided by the warrant, but may not be held responsible if the person arrested escapes. (c) The warrant is sufficient if it is in words and figures as follows (the blanks to be filled as necessary in each case):

State of West Virginia, Office of
County (or City) of County (or City) of
..... Officer.

To....., Chief of Police or Sheriff of City, of County of

It having been brought to the attention of the undersigned health officer for (city or county) of, West Virginia, that, reported as living or residing at in (city or county), is infected, or is reasonably suspected of being infected, with one or more sexually transmitted diseases by reason of the fact that has been reported as (set out any reasons set in section fourteen of this article, or other reasons)

and therefore reasonably suspected of being infected; and as the diseases have been declared to be infectious, contagious, communicable and dangerous to the public health.

This warrant commands you to apprehend, if found within your jurisdiction, and to bring before me at my office in the city or county of on the day of, 19 .., at o'clock, ... M, there to be further dealt with as provided by law.

Given under my hand, this the day of, 19

.....

Health Officer or Commissioner.

City (or County) of

West Virginia.

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§16-4-16. Hearing on warrant; detention.

When a party is brought in for a hearing upon arrest under the warrant provided in the preceding section, the health officer shall at once proceed to ascertain the facts in the case, and to this end he may summon witnesses, and administer oaths to such witnesses touching their testimony, and may commit for contempt for failure to answer proper questions, and may, if proper, discharge the party from further custody; but if from the testimony it appears that the party so apprehended is properly classifiable under any subdivision of section four of this article, touching persons reasonably suspected of being infected with a venereal disease, then such party shall not be released from custody until proof has been made showing the party is already under treatment from a reputable physician, or other person, or until an examination has been made to ascertain whether in fact said party is so infected, and results of all tests and examinations are known, and shall make all orders touching the care, custody, and examination of the party as are reasonably necessary in the premises, and if it is found that said party is infected, then he may make any other orders that may be necessary touching the treatment of such party, and if said party is suffering with one or more venereal diseases in an infectious stage, said party shall not be released from custody until the diseases are past such infectious stage, and said party may be detained or quarantined in any place or institution provided for the purpose, or in the patient's own home if the health officer thinks best; and if no other place is available for such purposes, then such party shall be detained in the city or county jail, as the case may be. And it shall be the duty of every city and every county in the state to take this contingency in hand when they are making up their estimates for taxation and levy purposes and to provide therefor.

§16-4-17. Release from detention.

If as a result of the tests and examination provided to be made in the preceding section, it is shown that the party so examined is suffering with a venereal disease, not in an infectious state, said party may be released from further detention upon signing the agreement herein required to be provided, and which agreement shall be signed by the persons who have become noninfectious under treatment and detention, but who have not been cured. All persons signing the agreement mentioned above shall observe its provisions; and any failure to do so shall be deemed a misdemeanor and, shall be punished as hereinafter provided. The agreement mentioned above shall be sufficient if in words and figures following, after the blanks have been filled to suit each individual case:

Agreement to be signed by persons who are suffering with a venereal disease and are to be released from detention or quarantine, before being cured, or by persons who voluntary submit themselves for treatment to the health clinics as provided by law. State of West Virginia,

County (or City) of _____

Witnesseth, That I, _____, residing at _____, in the county of _____, State of West Virginia, do hereby acknowledge the fact that I am at this time infected with a venereal disease, to wit: with _____ and that I agree to place myself under the care of _____ within _____ hours hereafter, and that I will remain under treatment of said physician or clinic until released by the health officer of _____, or until my case is transferred with the approval of said health officer to another regularly licensed physician or approved clinic; and that I further agree to report to the health officer above, within four days after beginning treatment from the above physician or clinic, of the medical treatment applied in my case, and that I will report thereafter as often as may be required of me by the health officer; and that I further agree to take all the precautions recommended by the health officer to prevent the spread of the above disease to other persons, and to this end that I will perform no act that might expose other persons to the above disease; and that I further agree, until finally released by the health officer, to notify him of any change in my address, and to obtain his consent before moving my abode outside his jurisdiction.

Witness my hand, this the _____ day of _____, 19__.

(Signature of Patient)

Approved this the ____ day of _____, 19__.

(Local Health Officer)

§16-4-18. Employment of infected person.

It shall be unlawful for any person having a venereal disease in an infectious stage to be engaged as a barber in any barbershop in the state, or to be engaged in any capacity in any bakery in the state, or to be employed at any hotel, restaurant, eating house, lunch counter, or other public place, as a cook, or cook's helper, or as a waiter, or in any other capacity whatever, where he may come in contact with food about to be served; and it shall be the duty of every physician or other person reporting a case of venereal disease hereunder required, to state in said report whether or not said person so reported is so engaged, and if so, to give the place where such party is so employed; and it shall be the duty of the local health officer, upon receipt of a report showing a person is so engaged, at once to notify the party to discontinue such employment; and if said party so notified fails or refuses to discontinue such employment within twenty-four hours after notice, then the party or parties employing said infected person shall be notified of the fact, and if such employer fails or refuses to take steps to have such infected person discontinue work within twenty-four hours after receiving notice from the health officer, he shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, every twenty-four hours thereafter that such infected party continues in the employment of said employer shall be a separate offense upon the part of said employer. In the meantime said health officer may, if the infected party is not under treatment, have the infected person arrested, detained and quarantined, or otherwise dealt with as may seem best to said health officer.

§16-4-19. Voluntary submission to examination and treatment; charges; disposition of money collected.

(a)(1) Any person may report to any municipal or county health department and voluntarily submit himself or herself to all tests and examinations necessary to ascertain whether he or she is infected with a sexually transmitted disease; and the health department shall conduct and administer all necessary tests and examinations to ascertain whether the person has any sexually transmitted disease.

(2) A person who is tested for sexually transmitted diseases at a local health department pursuant to this subsection shall be responsible for paying the reasonable costs of testing, either directly or through billing the person's medical provider.

(3) Local health departments may charge in accordance with their existing fee schedules and may charge patients for such testing on a sliding fee scale.

(b)(1) If tests and examinations show a person tested and examined pursuant to subsection (a) of this section to have a sexually transmitted disease, then the person shall elect whether he or she will take treatment from a private physician, or whether he or she will take treatment from the local health department.

(2) If a person elects to take treatment through the local health department, he or she may be required to pay for such treatment either directly or by the local health department billing the person's health insurance provider.

(3) Local health departments may charge in accordance with their existing fee schedules and may charge patients for treatment on a sliding fee scale.

(4) No individual may be refused treatment at a local health department due to a lack of insurance or inability to pay.

(c) All proper charges for examination and treatment that may be necessary pursuant to this section shall be paid by the individual or by that person's health insurance provider.

(d) All money collected under this section shall be paid to the local health department and the local health officer having jurisdiction shall collect and account for such funds collected hereunder.

§16-4-20. Communication of disease; certificate.

It shall be unlawful for any person suffering with an infectious venereal disease to perform any act which exposes another person to infection with said disease, or knowingly to infect or expose another person to infection with such disease; and no physician, health officer or other person shall give any certificate showing a person to be free from a venereal disease, but such certificate shall simply state the results of tests and examinations that may have been made, and what tests were made to arrive at the results stated.

§16-4-21. Quarantine.

In establishing quarantine for a venereal disease under the provisions of this article, the health officer establishing said quarantine may confine any person infected, or reasonably suspected of having such venereal disease, or any other person liable to spread such disease, to the house or premises in which such infected person lives, or he may require any such person to be quarantined in any other place, hospital or institution in his jurisdiction that may have been provided. If no such place has been provided, then such person shall be confined in the county or city jail under a quarantine order, and such jails shall always be available for such purposes. But if such person is to be quarantined in his home, then said health officer shall designate the area, room or rooms, that such person is to occupy while so confined, and no one except the attending physician or his immediate attendants shall enter or leave such room or rooms so designated without permission of said health officer, and no one except the local health officer shall terminate said quarantine, and this shall not be done until the diseased person has become noninfectious as determined by thorough clinical tests, or permission has been given by the West Virginia state director of health. If, to make any quarantine effective as provided herein, it becomes necessary, the local health officer may summon a sufficient guard for the enforcement of his orders in the premises. And every person who fails or refuses to obey or comply with any order made by said health officer hereunder, or under any other section concerning quarantine, and every person summoned as a guard who shall, without a lawful excuse therefor, fail or refuse to obey the orders and directions of the health officer in enforcement of said quarantine, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, shall be punished as hereinafter provided.

§16-4-22. Physicians to furnish statement of qualifications and facilities for treatment of venereal diseases.

It shall be the duty of every physician or other person in the state who proposes to treat or does treat venereal diseases herein, to file with the director of the bureau of venereal diseases of the state, upon a blank to be furnished by said director, a statement showing something of his preparation, experience and facilities in and for the treatment of such diseases; and if he fail or refuse to make such statement, or if he treat a patient for any of said diseases without first having made such statement, he shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, shall be punished as hereinafter provided.

§16-4-23. Costs and expenses of enforcement; jointly established places of detention.

All costs and expenses necessary to reasonably carry out the provisions of this article, touching the care, custody, detention, and treatment of persons coming within the purview of its provisions, shall be a general charge against the municipalities or counties, as the case may be, unless special arrangements have been made to defray such expenses. Where conditions and locations are such that more economical results may be secured, one or more municipalities, or counties and municipalities, may join together and establish one or more places for treatment and detention, as may be arranged by the several parties concerned, and to be supported upon a basis to be determined between them, and when this agreement has been made a matter of record by each party thereto, funds may be levied and expended by the several parties in pursuance of such agreement.

§16-4-24. Offenses by druggists.

(a) No druggist, pharmacist or other person, not a licensed physician under the laws of the state, may prescribe, recommend, sell, compound or mix any drugs, medicines or other substances to be used for the cure or alleviation of a sexually transmitted disease, including drugs, medicines or substances that are patented, proprietary or otherwise, unless:

(1) The druggist or pharmacist receives a written prescription, formula or order written for the person for whom the drugs or medicines are compounded and signed by a physician licensed to practice under the laws of the state; or

(2) The drug being recommended or sold has received federal food and drug administration approval for over-the-counter use.

(b) All drugs, medicines or substances that are known to the medical profession as being commonly used for the cure or alleviation of sexually transmitted diseases, whether the name is on the bottles or labels or not, is subject to the prohibitions established pursuant to the provisions of this section.

(c) All drugstores shall be at all times open to the inspection of any local health officer, or to any party designated by the director of the sexually transmitted diseases program of the state, to determine whether the provisions of this section are being carried out by the druggists or stores. A sale by a clerk is considered a sale by the owner or proprietor, and both may be prosecuted under the provisions of this article for a misdemeanor.

§16-4-25. Advertisements concerning venereal disease, etc.; penalty; exceptions.

Whosoever publishes, delivers or distributes or causes to be published, delivered or distributed in any manner whatsoever, in this state, any advertisement concerning a venereal disease, lost manhood, lost vitality, impotency, sexual weakness, seminal emissions, varicocele, self-abuse or excessive sexual indulgence, and calling attention to a medicine, article or preparation that may be used therefor, or to a person or persons from whom, or an office or place at which, information, treatment or advice relating to such disease, infirmity, habit or condition may be obtained, is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction thereof shall be punished by a fine of not less than \$100 nor more than \$300, or imprisonment in the county jail not to exceed six months, or both, in the discretion of the court.

Nothing in this section shall be construed as to prevent legitimate and legal public notices, placards, etc., issued under the direction of the state department of health or as to prevent sending out literature by either the state department of health or the United States Public Health Service.

§16-4-26. Offenses generally; penalties; jurisdiction of justices; complaints.

Any person violating any provision of this article, where no other punishment is provided, shall be punished by a fine of not less than ten nor more than \$100, and may in addition thereto, at the discretion of the judge or justice trying the case, be imprisoned in jail for a period of not to exceed thirty days.

Justices of the peace shall have jurisdiction to try and determine all offenses arising under any provision of this article. Any citizen of the state may make complaint before a justice of any offense hereunder, and all proceedings shall be in the name of the state, and security for costs shall not be required, nor shall costs be adjudged against complainant unless it appears that no reasonable grounds for making complaint existed, and only then when it is made to appear that complainant acted in bad faith.

§16-4-27. Additional power and authority of local health officers.

The local health officer, in exercising any of the powers or authority vested in him by sections nine, ten, eleven, twelve, sixteen and twenty-one of this article with respect to any patient, minor or other person suffering or believed by him to be suffering from any venereal disease or diseases, may forthwith cause any such patient, minor or other person to be delivered into the custody of the state department of health for detention and treatment as provided in this article.

§16-4-28. Detention places.

The state department of health is hereby authorized and empowered to establish and provide a suitable place or places in the State of West Virginia for the detention of persons found to be suffering from any of the venereal diseases defined in section one of this article and to supervise, use and maintain such place or places in a manner deemed necessary or desirable in carrying out the provisions of this article.

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§16-4-29. Detention and treatment.

There shall be accepted and received into the custody of the state department of health at such place or places provided for in the next preceding section, persons found upon investigation and examination to be suffering from venereal diseases as defined in section one of this article, for the purpose of detention and necessary medical attention and treatment thereat or therein, until found to be and pronounced cured of the venereal disease or diseases from which they are suffering.

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§16-4-30. Continuous jurisdiction.

The state department of health is vested with and given continuous jurisdiction, authority and control over all persons received at and to be detained in or on the place or places provided for in the preceding sections, for all the purposes of this article, and until such persons are found upon proper examination to be and pronounced entirely free from and cured of any venereal disease or symptoms of such disease existing.

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