

KRUS medical rehabilitation during the COVID-19 pandemic

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Abstract

As a result of Art. 64 of the Act on social insurance for farmers, one of tasks of the Agricultural Social Insurance Fund is sending farmers for medical rehabilitation. Qualified persons are directed to one of six KRUS Agricultural Rehabilitation Centres in Jedlec, Iwonicz Zdrój, Horyniec Zdrój, Świnoujście, Szklarska Poręba and Kołobrzeg. In March, due to the epidemiological state, the activities of the Centres were temporarily reduced and then resumed under the sanitary and epidemiological regime. People referred for rehabilitation were then obliged to undergo a SARS-CoV-2 virus infection test. The increase in the number of cases resulted in a further reduction of activities in October of this year.

Keywords: KRUS Agricultural Rehabilitation Centres, COVID-19, epidemic, KRUS, limitations, medical rehabilitation.

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Introduction

One of the statutory tasks of the Agricultural Social Insurance Fund, pursuant to Art. 64 of the Act of December 20, 1990, is to refer insured persons entitled to benefits due to total incapacity to work on a farm and showing promise of recovery as a result of treatment and rehabilitation, or those at risk of total incapacity to work on a farm for free medical rehabilitation at a rehabilitation centre, ie a KRUS Farmers' Rehabilitation Centre.

This article aims to discuss the rehabilitation activities of KRUS during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Limiting the activities of KRUS Farmers' Rehabilitation Centres

In connection with the country's epidemiological situation, on March 16, 2020, the Minister of Health issued an ordinance amending the ordinance on the declaration of an epidemic threat in the territory of the Republic of Poland, and then on March 20, 2020 the ordinance on the declaration of an epidemic in the territory of the Republic of Poland.

According to the provisions of the above-mentioned ordinances, the activity of KRUS Farmers' Rehabilitation Centres was temporarily limited. This meant that the provision of healthcare services to patients was suspended, and therefore the Agricultural Social Insurance Fund (Kasa Rolniczego Ubezpieczenia Społecznego) had ceased referring eligible persons for medical rehabilitation.

Farmers referred for therapeutic rehabilitation by the Agricultural Social Insurance Fund, who had no possibility to complete it and stayed at the rehabilitation center for less than 17 days, could be sent back immediately after the centers resumed their activities.

Considering the situation in the country, the heads of the KRUS Farmers' Rehabilitation Centres were obliged to strictly apply the regulations preventing the spread of SARS-CoV-2 virus and to follow the instructions of competent authorities (e.g. the Council of Ministers, the Chief Sanitary Inspectorate, the Ministry of Health) and to comply.

Resumption of the KRUS Farmers' Rehabilitation Centres' activities and organization of sanitary and epidemiological rehabilitation treatments

The resumption of the activities of the KRUS Farmers' Rehabilitation Centres was possible after the Regulation of the Council of Ministers of May 2, 2020 on the establishment of certain restrictions, orders and bans in connection with the epidemic came into force.

Bearing in mind the above and the safety of patients and staff, the Centres have developed Anti-epidemic Guidelines of the KRUS Headquarters for OR/PT KRUS and KRUS Farmers' Rehabilitation Centres for the safe resumption of the operation of rehabilitation centers of the Agricultural Social Insurance Fund.

In accordance with the Regulation of the Council of Ministers of May 29, 2020 on the establishment of certain restrictions, orders and bans in connection with the epidemiological state, the condition for the farmer to start rehabilitation was to obtain a negative SARS-CoV-2 test result, refunded by the Health, performed no earlier than 6 days before the start of the stay.

The basis for the coronavirus test was an electronic order issued by KRUS Farmers' Rehabilitation Centers in the EWP application, via the <https://gabinet.gov.pl/portal>, in accordance with the procedure agreed with the National Health Fund:

1. The Regional Department/Regional KRUS Center informed the KRUS Farmers' Rehabilitation Centre about the necessity to perform a diagnostic test for SARS-CoV-2 in people referred for therapeutic rehabilitation.
2. The collection point, on the basis of an electronic order issued by the KRUS Farmers' Rehabilitation Centre, visible in the EWP system, took a swab from the patient and sent it to the laboratory, also supplemented the necessary information in the EWP application.
3. The patient did not receive any referrals for the examination, he/she was only informed by the Regional Department/Local Facility of KRUS, where they can apply for the collection.
4. The COVID laboratory carried out the order and entered the diagnostic test result into the EWP application.
5. The test result was available to the ordering party, i.e. the KRUS Farmers' Rehabilitation Centre, in the EWP application.
6. KRUS Farmers' Rehabilitation Centre informed the Regional Department/KRUS Field Centre about the test results in the form of qualification/lack of qualification for therapeutic rehabilitation.

7. The Regional Department/KRUS Field Facility informed the patient about whether or not they qualified for therapeutic rehabilitation.

Before the start of the stay, each patient was obliged to submit a declaration to the Fund's organizational unit that, due to the country's epidemiological threat, they are aware of the need to undergo rehabilitation in accordance with the applicable sanitary and epidemiological requirements and the related restrictions regarding their stay at the KRUS Farmers' Rehabilitation Centre. In addition, they had to declare, that to the best of their knowledge, they have not suffered from COVID-19 and have not been hospitalized for this reason, they haven't had contact with a sick person or a person under quarantine, they have not had to not quarantine themselves, and have not been abroad or had contact with someone who has.

The first sessions after the resumption of the activities of the KRUS Farmers' Rehabilitation Centres began on June 18 in KRUS CRR in Świnoujście and the rest were launched successively: June 21 in Kołobrzeg, June 22 in Jedlec, June 23 in Horyniec Zdrój and Szklarska Poręba and June 24 in Iwonicz Zdrój.

Medical rehabilitation carried out at the Agricultural Rehabilitation Centres of KRUS was sanitary – patients were accommodated individually in their rooms.

No outsiders could stay at the facilities, meals were administered in shifts to maintain the recommended distances between patients.

The treatment base maintained sanitary rigor regarding the number of people staying in the rooms at the same time. Between the implementation of services for individual people, the stands were disinfected and, if possible, the rooms were aired.

Patients and staff staying in the common areas were obliged to cover their mouth and nose.

Due to the persistent epidemiological state and the continuous increase in the number of cases, a document titled "Procedure in the case of suspected SARS-CoV-2 virus infection in a patient during their stay at the KRUS Farmers' Rehabilitation Centre" was also prepared in the event a patient staying at the KRUS Farmers' Rehabilitation Centre developed symptoms, taking into account national procedures and current guidelines of the Minister of Health.

Since the Centres have resumed their operations by the Centres, the Fund has referred nearly 2,300 patients for rehabilitation.

Restriction of the activities of KRUS Farmers' Rehabilitation Centres

The changing epidemiological situation and the constantly growing number of infected people meant that, in accordance with the Regulation of the Council of Ministers of 23 October 2020 amending the regulation on the establishment of certain restrictions, orders and bans in connection with the occurrence of the epidemic, the activities of KRUS Farmers' Rehabilitation Centres were again temporarily restricted on the provision of healthcare services in the field of therapeutic rehabilitation.

Stays at the rehabilitation Centres which began before the above-mentioned regulation came into force were implemented as planned. The last stay ended on November 8, 2020.

After the abolition of the limitations in the operation of the KRUS Farmers' Rehabilitation Centres, the Agricultural Social Insurance Fund will make every effort to resume rehabilitation activities while maintaining the current high level of services provided.

Summary

This year, the rehabilitation activity of the KRUS Agricultural Social Insurance Fund has been reduced twice due to the country's current epidemiological state which meant that farmers were no longer sent for therapeutic rehabilitation.

The Fund resumed medical rehabilitation in the period from June to October, maintaining sanitary rigor, in order to ensure the safety of the patients and staff staying at the Centres.

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