

## Chen scheduled for operation today to treat sleep apnea

Written by Taipei Times

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An operation has been scheduled for former president Chen Shui-bian (陳水扁) today at the Taichung Veterans General Hospital to treat a severe case of sleep apnea.

A statement released by Chen's office yesterday said breathing disruptions have resulted in deprivation of oxygen to the brain and other health problems for the former president.

In April, Chen — who is serving a 20-year jail sentence for corruption — was transferred from Taipei Veterans General Hospital to Taichung Prison's Pei Teh Hospital, where a special medical zone was set up for him.

The statement — released after his transfer — said that Chen's worsening health and brain functions were not caused by his treatment in prison, but were due to advancing illnesses as his health has deteriorated in “step-wise progression.”

The statement said Chen stutters when he speaks, his hands shake uncontrollably, he walks unsteadily and has a loss of bladder control, which necessitates the changing of his underwear more than a dozen times a day.

A group of doctors agreed that Chen can not be treated by one medication or one operation because they were uncertain what problems Chen would face in the future, the statement said.

Improving Chen's surroundings is the one most effective ways to alleviate his worsening condition, the statement quoted the doctors as saying, adding that Chen should receive treatment at home.

Chen's office said the authorities should grant the former president medical parole so that he could receive treatment at home, as “this is the way to respect the assessment of professional medical practitioners and accommodate public opinion. It would be in line with the protection of basic human rights, diminish social conflict and conform to international protocols, while his parole would benefit society.”

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According to the statement, Chen's condition has led to deprivation of oxygen for some time, which could seriously harm vital functions of his brain and heart.

It added that medical monitoring has indicated that Chen stops breathing up to 37 times per hour, and is only able to get one or two hours of sleep each night.

Source: [Taipei Times - 2013/12/14](#)