



Joint Gathering Ontario Region

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FIRST NATIONS & INUIT HEALTH BRANCH ONTARIO REGION:

The NIHB Program provides clients (registered First Nations and recognized Inuit) with coverage for a range of health benefits. Benefits under NIHB include prescription drugs and over-the-counter medications, dental and vision care, medical supplies and equipment, mental health counselling, and transportation to access health services not available locally.

NIHB is a national program, and benefits are available to eligible clients in Canada, regardless of place of residence.



HIGHLIGHTS OF WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING

- In July 2020, NIHB implemented a new claims processing system and services for clients and providers, through Express Scripts Canada (ESC).
- Claims and client reimbursements for pharmacy, dental, MS&E, vision care and mental health counselling benefits are now processed by ESC.
- A new and improved online Drug Benefit List on the ESC website allows clients and prescribers to easily search NIHB drug benefits and coverage criteria.
- NIHB clients and providers can create secure, web-based individual accounts through the ESC NIHB website (<https://nihb.express-scripts.ca>). Through their web accounts, clients and providers can:
 - Submit benefit claims and client reimbursement requests online
 - View benefit claim history and status of pending requests
 - Receive NIHB Program communication directly by email
 - Providers can enroll with the program and submit prior approval and predetermination requests
 - Clients can submit appeals through their web accounts



AFN/FNIHB NIHB JOINT REVIEW

- Assembly of First Nations (AFN)/First Nations & Inuit Health Branch (FNIHB) NIHB Joint Review work continues with most benefit reviews now complete, and the medical transportation review currently underway.
- 2012 Chiefs in Assembly passed a resolution calling for a review of the NIHB program; the National Joint Review process began in 2014.
- Through a comprehensive review of each benefit area, the joint review will continue to identify and implement actions that enhance client access to benefits, identify and address gaps in benefits and streamline service delivery to be more responsive to client needs.
- NIHB Progress List details ongoing improvements made throughout the Process (also available at www.canada.ca/nihb-joint-review)



PHARMACY BENEFIT

The NIHB Drug Benefit List is the listing of eligible products for coverage. The Drug Benefit List is posted online on the Express Scripts Canada. NIHB provider and client website and changes made to it will continue to be communicated via newsletters and bulletins on that website. The site provides valuable information on open benefits, limited use benefits and relevant coverage criteria.

Also available:

- Special Formulary for Chronic Renal Failure Patients
- End-of-Life Care Formulary
- Formulary for Adjunct Medications Used For Active Cancer Treatment
- The Guide for Pharmacy Benefits can be referenced for other information such as the drug review process and descriptions of benefit categories (eg. Exceptions, Exclusions)



MEDICAL SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT

- Introduction of the Medical Supplies and Equipment Advisory Committee (MSEAC):
 - The (MSEAC) is a multidisciplinary advisory body of highly qualified health professionals and academic specialists who will provide evidence informed impartial expert advice and recommendations to the NIHB program.
 - ISC maintains the responsibility for benefit listing decisions.
 - The committee includes Indigenous members, and health professionals who have clinical experience working with First Nations and Inuit.
 - First Nation and Inuit national organizations have observer seats on this committee.



MEDICAL SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT

- New listings for limited use benefits including medical strollers, standing frames, positioning chairs, portable ceiling lifts and tracks, FM systems, cochlear implant and bone anchored hearing system processors, voice restoration equipment, and a 'back-up' manual wheelchair for clients using a power wheelchair.
- Removed prior approval requirement for many benefits including complete hearing assessment, hearing aid accessories, adaptive feeding cup, offloading walking boot.
- Registered Practical Nurses (RPN) and Licenced Practical Nurses (LPN) can now recommend certain items on the respiratory, self-care, medical surgical, and mobility equipment benefit lists.
- Occupational Therapists and Physiotherapists can now recommend some which includes: off-the-shelf and custom-fitted limb and body orthotics, pressure garments (for renewal requests) and ABG and/or oximetry testing will be accepted for initial and renewal requests for oxygen.



VISION CARE

- The NIHB Program implemented a new approach to eyewear coverage in 2019.
- The new approach provides clients with an amount, the full value of which can be used towards the purchase of any type of prescription eyewear (glasses or contact lenses) the client choose
 - \$275 for most clients, and \$415 for clients with higher prescription qualifying for high index materials
- Exceptions for:
 - Up to \$450 for contact lenses based on prescription (higher near or far-sightedness, astigmatism)
 - Exceptions for clients having very high prescriptions, corneal irregularities etc.
 - Flex frames, early lens replacement, polycarbonate, required tints/coatings



MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELLING

Mental health provider enrolment forms now include information on provider specialties, including trauma informed care, cultural competency and linkages with community health supports.

First 2 hours/sessions do not require prior approval.

Individual, group, or telehealth counselling options available.

Focus on quality service to clients:

- Group consists a maximum of 8 participants total
- Maximum daily billable hours per provider is 8 total
- No requirement to submit treatment plan prior to beginning counselling
- Online forms and online platform available to providers and clients
- Faster processing of approvals



MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELLING

- In 2017, the mental health counselling benefit was expanded (no longer limited to crisis intervention).
- Up to 22 hours of counselling in 12 months, with additional sessions approved on a case by case basis.
- Consistent approach to setting mental health counsellor reimbursement rates to attract and retain professionals.
- More than 1,800 enrolled providers in Ontario including Registered Psychologists, Social Workers, Psychotherapists, along with qualified Nurses and Occupational therapists.
- Funding for Traditional Healers in support of mental health with services delivered by First Nations through contribution agreement funding.



MEDICAL TRANSPORTATION

Medical Transportation benefits are provided to assist clients to access medically required health services not on reserve or in the community:

- Insured services by provincial or territorial health plans (appointments with physician, hospital care)
- Diagnostic tests and medical treatments ordered by a physician or other health professional, covered by provincial or territorial health plans
- Publicly funded alcohol, solvent, drug abuse and detox treatment
- Traditional healers
- Non-Insured Health Benefits (vision, dental, mental health, medical supplies and equipment)
- Publicly funded preventative screening such as breast cancer screening where coordination with other medical travel is not feasible



MEDICAL TRANSPORTATION

Escorts can be covered with a prior approval:

- Automatic coverage for minors, and where there is existing documentation on file to support the need for an escort.
- Pregnant clients travelling for childbirth, and clients travelling for procedures requiring sedation, are also covered for an escort (let NIHB know if this is the reason for travel).
- For clients who may need an escort for other reasons, provide information on the function of the escort (the medical condition of the patient is not required).
- Multiple escorts can be approved on exception when there is a need.



DENTAL CARE

- Expanded coverage of fluoride treatment to include clients of all ages.
- Added coverage for topical antimicrobial treatments such as silver diamine fluoride.
- Added coverage for all-porcelain/ceramic crowns.
- Removed the predetermination requirement for coverage of mild sedation, surgical tooth extractions, prefabricated posts, standard complete dentures.
- Standard root canal treatments are no longer subject to frequency guidelines.



NIHB NAVIGATORS

NIHB Navigators help clients 'navigate' the NIHB Program.

Navigators are a resource for communities, organizations or individuals who need support on NIHB-related issues.

Navigators are employed by regional First Nations organizations ensuring:

- Increase understanding of the NIHB Program and share information on eligible benefits
- Help clients and communities to resolve NIHB-related issues
- Link with health departments and agencies to help improve access to health services



NIHB CONTACT INFORMATION

NIHB website: www.canada.ca/nihb-contacts

Ontario Region Client Information line: 1-800-640-0642

Ontario Region Prior Approval: 1-800-881-3921 (Health Care Providers Only)

Ontario Region NIHB FAX: 1-800-806-6662

NIHB Drug Exception Centre: 1-800-580-0950 (Health Care Providers and Clients)

NIHB Dental Predetermination Centre (Health Care Providers and Clients):

Dental Services: 1-855-618-6291

Orthodontic Services: 1-866-227-0943



NIHB CONTACT INFORMATION

MEDICAL TRANSPORTATION

Thunder Bay

nihbmt.TBay@sac-isc.gc.ca 1-877-779-7749, Fax: 1-866-551-5650

Sioux Lookout

slnihbmedtravel-voyagemedssna@sac-isc.gc.ca 1-888-283-8885, Fax: 1-807-737-3879

Southern

onnihbtrans-ssna@sac-isc.gc.ca 1-800-881-3921 Option 3, Fax: 1-800-806-6662

ONTARIO REGION AFTER HOURS URGENT MEDICAL TRANSPORTATION SUPPORT (Evenings/Weekends/Holidays)

All Ontario (Not including Sioux Lookout) – Daily 1600-0800

Phone: 1-833-675-3081

Weekend on Call 1-888-283-8885 – 0800-1600 includes Statutory Holidays

Sioux Lookout Area First Nations Clients (All travel except clients in Thunder Bay)

Sioux Lookout First Nations Health Authority (Discharges)

Phone: 1-807-737-5080 (0800-1600) 1-833-633-8728 (1600-2200) Monday- Friday

1-807-737-3850 Accommodations

Wequedong Lodge for Sioux Lookout Clients in Thunder Bay

Phone: 1-807-625-6039 (Discharges)

1-807-623-1431 (Intake)



OTHER USEFUL CONTACTS

Jordan's Principle: 1-855-572-4453

The First Nations and Inuit Hope for Wellness Help Line: 1-855-242-3310

'Contact Us' web page through the ISC website (www.canada.ca/nihb-contacts) including a direct email address (nihb-ssna@sac-isc.gc.ca) for direct inquiries and feedback

Website www.canada.ca/nihb is the primary means for communicating program information to clients.

Quarterly client newsletters to advise of policy and coverage changes is published on the Program Updates section of the website. Distributed to Chiefs, Health Directors, Navigators and others for sharing Promoted through the Healthy First Nations and Inuit Facebook page.

Sign up for regular NIHB program updates at;
www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1578079214611/1578079236012

- Indigenous Services Canada Registration (for clients to obtain Status number) 1-800-567-9604 (9 am – 7 pm)
 - Service Ontario's Aboriginal Birth Registration Initiative was established to help increase awareness of birth registration and birth certificate services for new parents
 - Ontario Works may be able to assist with costs associated with birth registration and the issuance of birth certificates

