



## HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

### CLIENT TRAVEL POLICY

---

#### **POLICY STATEMENT**

The Department of Health and Social Services provides travel benefits to eligible clients who must travel in order to access necessary health and/or social services that are not available in their home community.

#### **PRINCIPLES**

This Policy is based on the following principles:

1. The Department is committed to the Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit concepts of Pijitsirniq - to serve, and Inuuqatigiitsiarniq - respect for others.
2. All activities of the health and social services system support an approach that places people first.
3. The cost of travel should not be an economic barrier to individuals requiring health and social services that are not available in their home community.
4. Health and social services programs should be designed to be fair, understandable, easy to access and consistently applied across the territory.
5. The health and social services system should operate in a way that is accountable, sustainable, and responsive.
6. The Nunavut health care system supports the accessibility principle of the *Canada Health Act*.
7. Inuit societal values will be recognized and respected.

#### **APPLICATION**

This Policy is issued under the authority of the Executive Council. The Policy applies to all clients who access health and social services outside their home community pursuant to the following legislation and programs.

- *Adoption Act* (Departmental adoptions only)
- *Child and Family Services Act*
- *Guardianship and Trustee Act*
- *Hospital Insurance and Health and Social Services Administration Act*

---

Revised: October 2007

Page 1 of 10

Date of Expiry: March 31, 2012

- *Medical Care Act*
- *Mental Health Act*
- Specialized Adult Program
- Family Violence Program

Medical travel arrangements and, in some cases, payments for accommodation, meals, ground transportation, escorts and travel can also be determined in part or in whole by a client's ability to access insurance or other programs which are not covered by this Policy. These include but are not limited to:

- Non-Insured Health Benefits Program
- Extended Health Benefits Program
- Workers Compensation Board
- Public Service Health Care Plan
- Private Insurance Plans

## **DEFINITIONS**

Approved Centres - a hospital, clinic, birthing centre, shelter, residential facility or rehabilitation centre approved by the Deputy Minister for the provision of health and/or social services that are not available in a client's home community.

Client - a person who must travel in order to access health and/or social services. In the case of social services a client could be comprised of a family unit.

Co-payment - the portion of eligible medical travel expenses which must be paid by eligible clients as determined in accordance with this Policy.

Director – a Director of Health and Social Services responsible for the administration of programs and services for certain communities within a specific region of Nunavut, working from a regional office of Health and Social Services and reporting to the regional Executive Director.

Guidelines – written documentation that sets out in detail the procedures for implementing this Policy and the benefits available under various programs that support client travel.

Health and/or Social Services – the services that a Practitioner deems clinically necessary for a client. These may include but are not limited to: health care, addictions treatment, specialized counseling, relocation to a safer place, visits from a family member, or other interventions.

Intercommunity Transportation - authorized travel between Nunavut communities and/or Approved Centres outside of Nunavut for the purpose of obtaining health and/or social services that are not available in a client's home community.

Practitioner – a person, usually with professional qualifications, who is legally qualified to deliver health care and/or social services by virtue of their ability to practice in Nunavut through employment, licensing or registration, such as nurses, physicians, social workers, mental health workers and midwives.

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### Minister

The Minister of Health and Social Services (the Minister) is accountable to the Executive Council for the implementation of this Policy.

The Minister may:

- (i) approve program provisions; and
- (ii) determine the amount of a co-payment.

### Deputy Minister

The Deputy Minister of Health and Social Services (the Deputy Minister) is accountable to the Minister for the administration of this Policy.

The Deputy Minister may:

- (i) authorize Practitioners to approve applications for client travel in accordance with this Policy.
- (ii) designate Approved Centres for the purposes of this Policy.
- (iii) determine the nearest Approved Centre for necessary and appropriate health and/or social services.
- (iv) designate boarding facilities and approve private medical boarding homes for the purposes of this Policy.

### Practitioners

Practitioners determine the care a client requires and whether travel is required in order to receive the appropriate care. Practitioners use the Guidelines to apply the Policy fairly and consistently, while making sure the health and/or social needs of the client are met.

## **PROVISIONS**

### (1) Exclusions

Medical travel benefits will not be authorized for medical travel originating outside Nunavut.

(2) Social Services

(a) Eligibility

With respect to the provision of client travel for social services, all individuals are covered under the terms of this Policy, under all circumstances (i.e. everyone is considered to be an eligible recipient when travel has been approved).

- (i) An individual who requires emergency social services does not need to have a Nunavut Health Care Card or be a resident of Nunavut.

(b) Terms and Conditions

- (i) Intercommunity transportation benefits as defined in Schedule 1 of this Policy for travel to Approved Centres.
- (ii) Escort benefits as defined in Schedule 2 of this Policy.

(3) Medical Travel

(a) Eligibility

Eligibility is restricted to residents who require medical travel to the nearest Approved Centre for necessary and appropriate insured health services and who meet the following criteria:

- (i) The client must hold a valid registration with the Nunavut Health Care Plan.
- (ii) The reason for travel is a valid medical referral and there are clinical reasons why the travel cannot be deferred until the client is traveling for other reasons.
- (iii) The client who is an employee, or the dependent of an employee, and has medical travel benefits through their employer, directly and/or through other insurance plans, will be approved to travel. However, the Department of Health and Social Services will subsequently bill the client or their insurance plans for the full cost of the transportation provided.
- (iv) The client must obtain prior approval for the applicable medical travel benefits.

(b) Terms and Conditions

- (i) Intercommunity transportation benefits as defined in Schedule 1 of this Policy for travel to Approved Centres.
- (ii) Escort benefits as defined in Schedule 2 of this Policy.

(c) Persons Not Eligible for Client Travel Benefits

- (i) In emergency circumstances the cost of medical travel (excluding social services) for non-residents will be paid by the Government of Nunavut. However, the individual will be billed for the full cost of the transportation provided.

(4) Appeals

- (i) A client has the right to appeal a decision respecting travel arrangements, use of an escort, or the Approved Centre selected.
- (ii) Appeals will be dealt with in accordance with the Guidelines established in support of this Policy.

(5) Accountability

- (i) The Department will submit an annual report concerning the implementation of this Policy to the Minister.
- (ii) The Policy Guidelines will be reviewed annually.

## **FINANCIAL RESOURCES**

Financial resources required under this Policy are conditional on approval of funds in the Main Estimates by the Legislative Assembly and there being a sufficient unencumbered balance for the fiscal year for which the funds would be required.

## **PREROGATIVE OF EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Nothing in this policy shall in any way be construed to limit the prerogative of the Executive Council to make decisions or take action respecting the provision of assistance to Nunavut residents for health and social services client travel outside the provisions of this Policy.

## **SUNSET**

This Policy will be in effect from the date of signature until March 31, 2012.

**CLIENT TRAVEL POLICY**  
**SCHEDULES**

Intercommunity Transportation

Schedule 1

Escorts

Schedule 2

## SCHEDULE 1

### INTERCOMMUNITY TRANSPORTATION

#### 1. Benefits for Eligible Clients:

- (1) When the nearest Approved Centre for necessary and appropriate insured health services is in Nunavut and the client chooses to travel to another centre, travel benefits will only be provided to the nearest Approved Centre.
- (2) When the nearest Approved Centre for necessary and appropriate insured health services is outside Nunavut and the client chooses to travel to another centre, travel benefits will only be provided to the nearest Approved Centre.
- (3) The Government of Nunavut is a payer of last resort. This means that all other possible sources of funding must be used first.
- (4) Subject to the co-payment, if applicable, the benefits cover the following forms of transportation:
  - (i) Scheduled aircraft at economy airfare.
  - (ii) Charter aircraft in emergency situations or when chartered aircraft is a reasonable and cost-effective alternative to scheduled aircraft.
  - (iii) Ground transportation when required to transfer a client from one health facility to another.
  - (iv) The cost of travel to get a client who becomes seriously ill or badly injured on the land to the nearest health facility (subject to detailed provisions in the Guidelines).

#### 2. Co-payment

- (1) The amount of the co-payment shall be determined by the Minister.
- (2) No co-payment is assessed when the eligible client is:
  - (i) verified indigent;
  - (ii) a Senior Citizen enrolled in the Extended Health Benefits Program; or
  - (iii) an infant under two years of age who is traveling on a scheduled aircraft and who is not required to purchase a ticket.

### **3. Air Transportation Benefits – Return of a Body**

- (1) If a client or an escort dies while on approved travel, or while in an Approved Centre or facility, the following is covered:
  - (i) the body will be prepared to meet minimum airline regulations.
  - (ii) the body will be transported in the minimum standard casket.
  - (iii) the body will be returned by the most economical scheduled or chartered flight.
  - (iv) the body will be returned to the community where the client or escort lived when the travel began.
- (2) Exclusions
  - (i) removal and transfer of a body from one Nunavut community to another.
  - (ii) purchase of caskets that are above the travel standard required.

## SCHEDULE 2

### ESCORTS

#### 1. Requirement for Escorts

The referring Practitioner recommends the need for an escort. Escorts may be of two types:

- (1) medical escort – normally a physician, nurse or social worker who is required to provide professional care to the client while traveling; or
- (2) client escort – an adult authorized to accompany a client who is unable to travel without some assistance or who is authorized to stay for part or all of the required treatment.

#### 2. Criteria for Approving Client Escorts

A client escort will be authorized when:

- (1) there is a need for legal consent by a parent or guardian; or
- (2) the client has a mental or physical condition of a nature that he or she is not able to travel unassisted; or
- (3) where a language barrier exists to access required health or social services and interpreter services are not available at the Approved Centre; or
- (4) when the client is a unilingual Inuit language speaking elder, who is over the age of 60, unless the client states they do not require an escort (effective April 1, 2008); or
- (5) when the escort will participate in the client's treatment program and receive instructions on specific and essential home medical/nursing procedures that cannot be given to the client only; or
- (6) when the client is medically incapacitated.

Note: A second client escort for medical travel is only provided in rare situations when a Practitioner supports the request and approval is obtained from the Deputy Minister (or designate).

Note: One adult can act as an escort for a group of children when appropriate (e.g. travel for orthodontic procedures) subject to consent being obtained from the relevant parents or guardians.

### **3. Escort Expenses**

Escort expenses are authorized as follows:

- (1) For Medical Escorts:
  - (a) intercommunity airfare to and from the nearest Approved Centre, usually covered by Travel Warrants; and
  - (b) accommodation at approved commercial facilities, meals and other travel benefits at approved Government of Nunavut duty travel rates, when required; and
  - (c) local ground transportation as required between residence, health and/or social services facilities, accommodation and airports.
- (2) For Client Escorts:
  - (a) intercommunity airfare to and from the nearest Approved Centre, usually covered by Travel Warrants.

Note: Third-party insurance coverage may provide authorized Client Escorts with benefits for transportation, meals, boarding and local transportation. However these benefits are outside of the terms of this Policy.

- (3) For Social Services Client Escorts:
  - (a) intercommunity airfare to and from the nearest Approved Centre, usually covered by Travel Warrants; and
  - (b) accommodation at approved commercial facilities and meals at Government of Nunavut duty travel rates, when required; and
  - (c) local ground transportation as required between residence, social services facilities, accommodation and airports.

### **4. Reimbursement**

When Escorts incur expenses, they may request reimbursement by submitting a list of eligible expenses, original receipts and boarding passes.