

# FNHA'S POLICY ON MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS



First Nations Health Authority  
Health through wellness

# Medical Transportation

First Nations Health Benefits (FNHB) provides medical transportation (MT) benefits to support clients accessing medically-necessary health services not available in their community of residence. Eligible clients may be provided with funding for meals, accommodation, and transportation as required.

## What is covered?

Medical transportation may be provided for clients to access medically-necessary health services not available in their community of residence. Medically necessary health services may include:

- Medical services insured through the BC Medical Services Plan (MSP)
- Services covered by FNHB
- Publicly-funded diagnostic tests and preventative screening programs
- Traditional healers
- Treatment at the nearest appropriate in BC National Native Alcohol Program and Drug Abuse Program (NNADAP) funded or referred facility in BC

The MT benefit covers the most economical and efficient means of transportation, taking into account the urgency of the situation and the medical condition being addressed.

Some types of travel not listed as a benefit may be covered on an exceptional basis. Questions about coverage? Call our Health Benefit support line at **1.855.550.5454**

## Documentation

Clients requesting MT benefit coverage must provide the following documentation before travel is arranged:

- A referral from a doctor
- Confirmation of an upcoming appointment from the health provider or facility

For pre-approved MT trips, clients must provide confirmation of attendance from the health provider or facility after their appointment. Travel expenses will not be reimbursed without written confirmation of attendance.

## Travel Escorts

Clients may be eligible to travel with an escort in cases where the client:

- Is a minor
- Requires assistance with activities of daily living such as dressing, eating, or bathing
- Faces a language barrier
- Will receive instructions on specific and essential home medical or nursing procedures that cannot be given to the client only
- Is undergoing a medical procedure (e.g., day surgery) or has a medical condition that will result in the client requiring assistance
- Is travelling to give birth, including travel to be near medical care while awaiting childbirth (prenatal confinement)

Clients must provide documentation from their health care provider to support their need for an escort.



## Exclusions

Some types of travel are considered exclusions under the MT benefit. Clients cannot seek exception or appeal (for more about appeals, see page 28) for excluded travel. Examples of MT benefit exclusions include:

- Accessing medical appointments when travelling outside of Canada
- Compassionate travel (e.g., travelling to visit a family member who is receiving medical treatment)
- Payment of fees for a doctor's note that supports a client requests for MT
- Travel by clients in the care of a federal, provincial, or territorial institution (e.g., clients who are in prison)
- Travel to access treatment/assessment that is court-ordered or a condition of parole that is arranged by the justice system
- Travel outside of Canada for medical appointments
- Travel by clients when necessary medical services are available in their current area of residence
- Travel to access services requested by a third-party (e.g., medical exams required for a job or for insurance purposes)
- Travel back to a client's community of residence if the client becomes ill while away from home
- Travel where the only purpose is to pick up prescriptions, vision care products, or medical supplies and equipment that don't need to be fitted
- Travel to access non-medically necessary services
- Travel to adult day care or respite care
- Travel to interval or safe houses

## Client Responsibilities

Clients who receive MT benefits from FNHB have certain responsibilities, including:

- When possible, clients should give at least five days' notice prior to travelling to access medically necessary services to allow time for travel arrangements to be made. Without enough notice, clients may have to reschedule their appointment, or pay for their travel out-of-pocket and request reimbursement later.
- Clients should get prior approval from FNHB or the responsible First Nations community or organization for all non-emergency trips.
- Clients should attend their medical appointment as scheduled. Clients who do not attend medical appointments may be required to pay back any benefits they have received and pay for their travel costs on subsequent medical travel.
- Clients should get a signed or stamped confirmation from the health professional or facility where they attended their appointment and provide it to FNHB or the appropriate First Nations community or organization.
- Clients should protect all original warrants or vouchers given to them for their medical trip because these will not be replaced if lost or stolen.
- Clients should give as much notice as possible when cancelling an appointment, and at least 24 hours' notice when cancelling hotel or flight arrangements.
- Clients need to keep all their original receipts for payments made during their medical travel so that these can be submitted for reimbursement.
- Clients must avoid using threatening or verbally abusive language with patient travel clerks or health providers. Use of such language will not be tolerated and may result in clients being asked to pay for their travel out-of-pocket and request reimbursement after their medical travel.



# Accessing Medical Transportation Benefits

1

- Client has an appointment for a medically-necessary health service not available in their home community.

2

- Client should contact FNHB to see if they are covered by a Funding Agreement. If they are covered by a Funding Arrangement then MT benefits are arranged through the band office or office of a First Nations organization.
- Clients not covered by a Funding Arrangement should submit an MT request to FNHB with all relevant documentation, including a Confirmation of Appointment.

3

- FNHB reviews the request and determines eligibility based on program guidelines.

4

- FNHB makes travel arrangements and forwards the information to the client.

5

- Client attends the appointment as scheduled and obtains a Confirmation of Attendance.
- Client submits Confirmation of Attendance to FNHB.