

Bulletin



Bulletin Number	Date	Direct inquiries to
4493	April 1, 2009	Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care Health Services Branch 370 Select Drive, P.O. Box 168 Kingston, ON K7M 8T4
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Physicians, Hospitals, Clinics and Laboratories		

Subject: Amendments to the Out-of-Country Provisions of the *Health Insurance Act*, Regulation 552

Effective April 1, 2009, the out-of-country (OOC) provisions (Sections 27-29) of the [Health Insurance Act, Regulation 552](#), have been amended in support of equitable access to OHIP insured health services.

With respect to prior approved OOC health services for conditions arising inside Ontario, the amendments clarify that:

- Health services that are available in Ontario but that are not publicly funded do not qualify for funding.
- A hospital must be licensed as such by the government in whose jurisdiction it is situated and must routinely perform complex medical and complex surgical procedures.
- A health facility must be licensed as such by the government in whose jurisdiction it is situated and must routinely perform complex medical and complex surgical procedures. Alternatively, a health facility must be licensed as such by the government in whose jurisdiction it is situated and must have entered into a preferred provider arrangement* with the ministry.
- For services rendered in emergency circumstances, prior approval by the General Manager is not required. 'Emergency circumstances' means medical circumstances in which an insured person faces immediate risk of death or medically significant irreversible tissue damage.
- For services rendered in urgent circumstances in order to treat medical complications resulting from the provision of prior approved services, prior approval by the General Manager is not required. Urgent circumstances means emergency circumstances in which it is impossible or so impractical as to be impossible to give notice to the General Manager before the services are rendered.

The amendments include transitional provisions intended to ensure that there will be no disruption of care for patients who were approved for OOC services prior to the amendments.

For a link to the amended regulation or for information about the OOC Prior Approval Program, please visit the following website:

http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/public/program/ohip/outcountry_services.html.

Information may also be obtained by calling the OOC Unit at 1-888-359-8807.

*Note that a separate bulletin will be issued regarding preferred provider arrangements.