

INFOBulletin

Keeping health care providers informed of payment, policy or program changes

To: Physicians, Hospitals, Clinics and Laboratories Involved in Signing/Completing Travel Grant Application Forms

Published by: Primary Health Care Branch, Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care

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Re: Changes to the Northern Health Travel Grant Program – Accommodation Allowance Expansion

Page 1 of 3

What You Need to Know:

The purpose of this INFOBulletin is to inform you of changes to the Northern Health Travel Grant (NHTG) Program accommodation allowance.

Effective November 1, 2017, the NHTG program will have an enhanced accommodation allowance payable to patients depending on the duration of necessary lodging nights per treatment trip as follows:

- \$100 per lodging night up to 2 lodging nights;
- \$250 for 3 lodging nights;
- \$500 for 4-7 lodging nights; and
- \$550 for 8 or more lodging nights.

Associated with this program change, a change has been made to Section 3 of the NHTG application form where medical specialists, or ministry funded health care facility providers are asked to specify the necessary number of lodging nights required to access health care services during each patient's treatment trip.

An example of determining a patient's necessary need for more than one lodging night would be if a patient has to undergo pre-surgery tests a day before surgery, and the surgeon determines that it would not be safe for the patient to drive back home the same day after surgery. Under these circumstances, the surgeon would indicate in Section 3 of the application form that two lodging nights are necessary.

Background:

The NHTG program helps defray medical travel related expenses northern Ontario residents incur to access the closest medical specialist, or ministry funded health care facility services unavailable in their local communities within a radius of 100 kilometres (km). Included in the travel related cost covered by the NHTG program is the current \$100 flat rate accommodation allowance paid to eligible applicants per treatment trip of 200 km or more, irrespective of the number of lodging nights.

For service rendered on, or after November 1, 2017, patients may be eligible for additional accommodation allowance per treatment trip if it is necessary to spend more than one lodging night out-of-town in order to access medical specialist services/ministry funded health care facility-based procedures.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**Q1. What are the eligibility criteria for an accommodation allowance?**

A. Patient must:

1. Meet travel grant eligibility criteria;
2. Travel at least 200 km one-way from his/her area of residence to the closest medical specialist or health care facility able to provide the required health care service; and
3. Submit an accommodation receipt to prove he/she incurred an accommodation expense. Prior to November 1, 2017, the accommodation allowance is paid at \$100 per eligible treatment trip. For applicants under 18 years of age, an accommodation allowance receipt can be in the name of their parent/guardian.

Q2. What are the requirements to qualify for the expanded accommodation allowance?

A. Patients must:

1. Meet travel grant eligibility criteria;
2. Travel at least 200 km one-way from his/her area of residence to the closest medical specialist or health care facility able to provide the required health care service;
3. Receive health care services on, or after November 1, 2017;
4. Have confirmation in Section 3 of the application forms from their medical specialists/ministry funded health care facility providers that more than one lodging night is necessary to access medical specialist services/health care facility-based procedures; and
5. Provide lodging receipts for the number of lodging nights specified in Section 3 of the application form.

Q3. If a patient receives medical specialist/ministry funded health facility services before November 1, 2017, but submits an application after November 1, 2017, would the expanded accommodation allowance be payable?

A. No. An expanded accommodation allowance would only be payable to eligible applicants whose date of service is on, or after November 1, 2017.

Q4. Does this change to the NHTG application form have any effect on the K036 form fee?

A. No. Any referring physician (family physician or specialist) who completes Section 2 of the application form as well as the specialist who completes Section 3 of the same form is entitled to claim the K036 form fee.

NOTE: Please DISCARD OLD NHTG application forms and replace them with the NEW APPLICATION FORMS. If an older form is used **for service rendered on, or after November 1, 2017**, a patient's medical specialist/ministry funded health care facility provider will be required to provide a note on doctor's/ministry funded health facility letterhead specifying the necessary lodging nights a patient needs to access out-of-town health care services.