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Memorandum

To: Vendors of Record for Home Oxygen Services (VoR)

From: Susan Picarello,
Director, Assistive Devices Program

Date: February 1, 2016

Subject: Short Term Home Oxygen Therapy, Expanded Role for RRTs and Other Efficiencies

The Assistive Devices Program (ADP) is pleased to announce that on **March 1, 2016** the program will implement changes that will benefit Ontario residents who require ADP-funded home oxygen therapy.

On **February 11, 2016**, ADP will hold a *virtual* Vendor Education Session on the changes listed below. The information provided in the session will be particularly useful for your Regulated Health Professionals and staff responsible for billing and invoicing.

Enclosed is the revised Policy and Administration Manual for Home Oxygen Therapy. VoR staff are encouraged to review the manual and in advance of the Vendor Education Session, submit any questions electronically to the ADP (at adp@ontario.ca) or the Ontario Home Respiratory Services Association (mario.tino@sympatico.ca). Questions submitted in advance will help the ADP plan the session.

The ADP will provide instructions on how to join the virtual Education Session in a separate notification.

Changes:

1. Funding for Short-Term Home Oxygen Therapy

ADP provides funding for individuals who meet the program's medical eligibility criteria for hypoxemia at rest or hypoxemia on exertion, and where the need for home oxygen therapy is long-term (applicant's condition is stable and treatment regimen is optimized).

On **March 1, 2016**, ADP will begin funding short-term home oxygen therapy for individuals who meet the program's current medical eligibility criteria for hypoxemia at rest but, based on the prescriber's assessment, the need for home oxygen therapy is short-term (applicant's condition is acute and treatment regimen is not optimized).

Funding for short-term home oxygen therapy is **only available** to individuals who:

- are inpatients in the hospital or in the emergency department; and
- can be discharged home with short-term oxygen therapy.

Funding for short-term home oxygen therapy will be available for up to 60 days. At the end of the 60-day funding period, if the client continues to demonstrate a medical need for home oxygen therapy, the client can apply for an additional 30-day funding period for short-term home oxygen therapy or can apply for long-term home oxygen therapy.

Clients applying for additional funding must meet the medical eligibility criteria for short-term home oxygen therapy or long-term home oxygen therapy.

Enclosed you will find the following information:

- the new device codes for short-term home oxygen therapy;
- the revised Application for Funding Home Oxygen;
- Questions and Answers; and
- an information flyer being distributed to all hospitals in Ontario.

The ADP has asked the hospitals to post the flyer in areas of the hospital, such as emergency departments, where it is important that hospital staff are aware that funding for short-term home oxygen therapy is available.

If required, additional copies of the information flyer are available through the ADP website at <http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/adp/default.aspx>.

2. Expanded Role of Registered Respiratory Therapists

ADP is expanding the role of hospital-based and community-based Registered Respiratory Therapists (RRT) in the process to fund home oxygen therapy for Ontario residents who:

- are being discharged home from an acute or chronic care hospital, or are clients of a Community Care Access Centre (CCAC) or a Family Health Team;
- need oxygen therapy in the home; and
- are requesting ADP-funded home oxygen therapy for the first time.

In their expanded role, when a physician or nurse practitioner prescribes home oxygen therapy, the hospital-based or community-based RRT can complete the Application for Funding Home Oxygen in place of the prescriber by:

- transcribing the applicant's diagnosis;
- confirming the applicant has tried other treatment measures without success; and
- confirming that oxygen therapy is medically indicated, and is reasonable and necessary.

To participate in the expanded role, the hospital-based or community-based RRT must meet the following criteria at the time he/she assesses the applicant:

- hold a valid certificate of registration from the College of Respiratory Therapists of Ontario (CRTO);
- be employed at:
 - an acute or chronic care hospital;
 - a CCAC; or
 - a Family Health Team; and
- **not be employed** by a VoR for Home Oxygen Services.

The VoR must retain the prescription for home oxygen therapy in the client's file and submit the prescription to the ADP if requested.

More information on the expanded role of RRTs is available through the ADP website at <http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/adp/default.aspx> and the CRTO website at <http://www.crto.on.ca/members/professional-practice/adp-home-oxygen-program-2/>.

3. Other Efficiencies

ADP is implementing two changes to the 9-month application form. For clients who received funding for 90-days and are submitting a second application requesting funding for an additional 9 months, the following changes will take place, effective **March 1, 2016**:

- a. The prescriber is no longer required to complete and sign the Application for Funding Home Oxygen.
- b. An exercise assessment, performed at a hospital or independent health facility, is no longer required.
- a. A Regulated Health Professional employed by the VoR can perform the exercise assessment to confirm that the client continues to meet the medical eligibility criteria for exertional hypoxemia.

These changes will apply to any 9-month application where the gatekeeper's date is on or after **March 1, 2016**. In the absence of a prescriber's authorization date, the gatekeeper's date will be determined by the date of the oximetry study on the 9-month application.

For more information on any of these policy changes, please contact Maureen Williams, Senior Program Coordinator. You can reach Ms. Williams at maureen.williams@ontario.ca or 416 327-7368 or 1-800-268-6021, extension 7-7368.

(original signed by)

Susan Picarello
Director
Assistive Devices Program
Ministry of Health and Long Term Care

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