

Bulletin



Bulletin Number 4405	Date September 1, 2003	Direct inquiries to Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care Processing Office (address below)
Distribution Physicians, Hospitals, Clinics and Laboratories		

Subject: SERVICE RETENTION INITIATIVE PROGRAM 2003/2004

The Service Retention Initiative (SRI) Program exists to encourage physicians to maintain services in regions with a marked undersupply and to encourage specialists who provide highly subspecialized services to remain in the province.

Physicians whose **threshold eligible OHIP billings** [i.e. total billings, excluding: services set out in Appendix E of the Schedule of Benefits, Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) services, and Underserved Area Program (UAP) services] exceed the 2003/2004 threshold of \$455,000 can apply for an exemption to threshold reductions through the SRI Program.

Each year, the Physician Services Committee (PSC), which is made up of representatives from the Ontario Medical Association and the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, reviews the SRI Program eligibility criteria. For this year, the PSC has recommended continuing with the same program criteria.

The SRI is also a program intended to encourage recruitment so that conditions of regional physician undersupply are reduced or eliminated. As a condition of enrolment, physicians must agree to assist in recruiting additional physicians to their areas. Recruitment will allow the physician to adjust his/her practice by, for example, redistributing patient services to their colleagues to avoid or minimize the effects of future threshold reductions.

Annual Application Required

All physicians who applied for admission to the 2002/2003 program will automatically be mailed an application for 2003/2004. All physicians who wish to renew their enrolment in the SRI Program must submit an application, including all required documentation as well as evidence of their efforts to satisfy the recruitment provision of their SRI Program agreement.

Office locations

Barrie 34 Simcoe St. Suite 102 L4N 6T4	Etobicoke 3300 Bloor St. W., Unit 142 M8X 2W8	Hamilton 119 King St. W P.O. Box 2280, Stn. A L8N 4C8	Kenora 220-808 Robertson St. P9N 1X9	Kingston 1055 Princess St. P.O. Box 9000 K7L 5A9	Kitchener 1400 Weber St. E. Unit B2 N2A 3Z8	London 217 York St., 5th Floor P.O. Box 5700 Station A N6A 4L6
Mississauga 201 City Centre Dr. P.O. Box 7020, Stn. A L5A 3M1	Newmarket 465 Davis Dr. Unit 108 L3Y 8T2	North Bay 101-447 McKeown St. P1B 9S9	North York 4400 Dufferin St N M3H 6A8	Oakville Oakville Town Centre II 220 North Service Rd. W. L6M 2Y3	Oshawa Exec. Tower, Oshawa Centre. 419 King St. W. P.O. Box 635 L1H 8L4	Ottawa Fuller Building 75 Albert Street K1P 5Y9
Owen Sound 981 2nd Avenue E. N4K 2H5	Peterborough 550 Lansdowne St. W. K9J 8J8	St. Catharines 301 St. Paul St. Mezzanine Level L2R 3M8	Sarnia 452 Christina St. N. N7T 5W4	Sault Ste. Marie Roberta Bondar Place 70 Foster Dr., Ste. 100 P6A 6V4	Scarborough 2063 Lawrence Ave. E. M1R 2Z4	Sudbury 199 Larch St., Suite 801 P3E 5R1
Thunder Bay 435 James St. S., Suite 113 P7E 6T1	Timmins 38 Pine St. N., Suite 110 P4N 6K6	Toronto 47 Sheppard Ave.E. Suite 417 M2N 7E7	Windsor 1427 Ouellette Ave. N8X 1K1	Head Office P.O. Box 48 Kingston, ON K7L 5J3		

Deadline for Submission

Applications and all supporting documentation must be received by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care on or before **February 28, 2004**.

Obtaining an Application Package

Additional information and application packages may be obtained by telephoning (613) 548-6561, making a request by fax to (613) 548-6309 or by writing to:

Ministry of Health & Long-Term Care
Health Services Division
Provider Services Branch
2nd Floor, 49 Place d'Armes
Kingston, ON K7L 5J3

Application forms are available on the internet at:

http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/public/forms/form_menus/ohip_fm.html

The forms must be completed and mailed to the above address or faxed to the number above. If the application is faxed, the signed original and supporting documents must follow by mail, so that they are received no later than February 28, 2004.

Eligibility for SRI Program

Only physicians whose threshold eligible billings exceed or are likely to exceed the applicable threshold during the fiscal year (April 1, 2003 – March 31, 2004) are eligible for the program. Applicants must have provided from the start of the year, and must agree to continue to provide during the balance of the fiscal year, services in the specialty, subspecialty, or domain of practice for which the exemption is claimed, and must submit evidence to that effect if requested.

For the purposes of the SRI program, a specialist is as defined in the Schedule of Benefits for Physician Services under the Health Insurance Act, General Preamble, page GP-41 (July 1, 2003). Eligibility is limited to physicians practising in specialties in which they are certified.

Relevant supporting documentation must be submitted with the application. Examples of such documentation are:

- a letter explaining special circumstances/services provided;
- a copy of specialty/subspecialty certificate and other proof of training where applicable;
- current letters of support from peers as required.

The ministry's most recent available provincial physician supply and population data will be used to determine eligibility.

Note: Physicians currently receiving Underserviced Area Program incentive grants are exempt from threshold reductions and need not apply.

Categories for Approval – Specialists

Geographic Undersupply: The geographic area (defined as the municipality and county in which the applicant practises as well as the adjoining counties) must be less than 75% of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC) standard for an individual specialist to be considered eligible under the category of “Geographic Undersupply”.

Provincial Resource: The provision of highly subspecialized services to the entire province or large regional referral base with limited numbers of physicians able to perform the service. Applicants providing a routine specialty service using a different technique or technology will not be considered provincial resources. Current letters of support from colleagues attesting to the special expertise of the applicant are required each year.

Service Specific Exemption: Fee code exemptions for obstetrics, invasive cardiology procedures, dialysis, retinal surgery, glaucoma surgery, and ocular photodynamic therapy (PDT) with verteporfin will continue in 2003/2004.

Categories for Approval – General Practitioners/Family Practitioners (GP/FPs)

Geographic Undersupply: GP/FPs who practise full time in a community, municipality, or township designated as underserviced by the ministry, with a complement of four or fewer GP/FPs, which has 75% or less of the recommended complement (one or more vacancies), may be eligible for exemption. The ministry’s most recent province-wide data available will be used to determine eligibility.

Undersupplied Domains of Practice: GP/FPs who practise in undersupplied domains of practice (HIV/AIDS, palliative care, and French language services) may be eligible for exemption. A physician who applies for a threshold exemption under this category must provide the majority of his/her services within the undersupplied domain of practice.

Special Consideration: GP/FPs who can demonstrate that their practice is unique and who provide a substantial proportion of essential and undersupplied services to his/her community. “Special Consideration” applications will be reviewed and a decision will be recommended by Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care Medical Consultants.

Service Specific Exemption: Fee code exemptions for obstetrics, HIV/AIDS and palliative care will be continued for 2003/2004.

Appeal Process

A physician whose application is denied and who wishes to appeal the decision must request, in writing, an appeal by the ministry within **15** days of receiving the notice of denial.

The request for appeal must be forwarded in writing to:

Director, Provider Services Branch
Health Services Division
Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
2nd Floor, 49 Place d'Armes
Kingston ON K7L 5J3

or

Fax: (613) 548-6309

Full documentation in support of the appeal must be submitted within 30 days of the appeal request.