

Bulletin



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| Bulletin Number 4419 | Date February 8, 2005 | Direct inquiries to Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care Processing Office (address below) |
| Distribution Northern Physicians, Hospitals, Clinics and Laboratories | | |

Subject: **NORTHERN HEALTH TRAVEL GRANT PROGRAM**

The Northern Health Travel Grant (NHTG) Program helps to defray some of the travel costs for residents of Northern Ontario who must travel long distances to receive medically necessary physician specialist services unavailable in their local community.

On November 22, 2004, the Minister of Northern Development and Mines announced the implementation of the 2004 Ontario Government budget commitment to return the definition of Northern Ontario to what it was prior to September 2000. As a result, residents of the District of Muskoka will no longer be eligible to receive travel assistance through the Northern Health Travel Grant (NHTG) Program.

Effective January 1, 2005, the following change(s) will take place:

- § Residents residing in communities within the District of Muskoka will no longer be eligible to receive travel grants.
- § Residents within the District of Muskoka who travelled between November 1, 2004 and December 31, 2004, for purposes of receiving medical specialist services that meet NHTG eligibility criteria, will be allowed to submit their travel grant applications within twelve (12) months from the date of treatment.
- § Travel grant applications for treatment provided before November 1, 2004, must be received by the ministry within six (6) months from the date of treatment.

Office locations

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|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 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 Ave. 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 | | |

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q1. What changes have been made to the Northern Health Travel Grant (NHTG) program?

A1. In the 2004 Budget, the Ontario Government made a commitment to return the definition of Northern Ontario to what it was prior to September 2000. With the implementation of this budget commitment, the District of Muskoka is no longer part of Northern Ontario, and as a result, residents of the District are no longer eligible for travel assistance through the NHTG program, effective January 1, 2005.

Q2. How does this change the current program?

A2. Prior to January 1, 2005, residents of the District of Muskoka were eligible to receive travel grants. Since travel assistance is only available to the residents of Northern Ontario, the only change is that the residents of Muskoka will cease to be eligible for travel grants.

Q3. When are these changes effective?

A3. These changes will take effect on January 1, 2005. However, applications from eligible applicants for treatment provided between November 1, 2004 and December 31, 2004 will be honoured after January 1, 2005, as long as they are submitted within twelve (12) months from the date of treatment.

Q4. A patient has an application for a trip made in September 2004 that has not yet been submitted? Can it be submitted now and get paid?

A4. Yes, as long as the application is received by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care within six (6) months from the date treatment was provided. The requirement to submit travel grant applications within six (6) months from the date of service was changed to twelve (12) months, effective November 1, 2004.

Q5. Who is eligible for the NHTG program with the new changes?

A5. The NHTG program is designed to help defray part of the travel costs of Northern Ontario residents who must travel at least 100 kilometres one-way to receive medically necessary insured specialist, or designated health facility services unavailable locally. For purposes of the NHTG, a northern resident is a person who lives in Northern Ontario which is currently defined as the territorial Districts of Algoma, Cochrane, Kenora, Manitoulin, Nipissing, Parry Sound, Rainy River, Sudbury, Thunder Bay, and Timiskaming.

Q6. Where do I get information about the NHTG program?

A6. We have a Fact Sheet describing the program. It is listed on the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care's website at:
http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/public/pub_menus/pub_ohip.html.

Q7. Where do I get a copy of the NHTG application form?

A7. Application forms can be obtained from your local Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care OHIP office (for office locations see the government pages of the telephone book under Health and then OHIP). You may also obtain a copy of the application form from the ministry's website at:
http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/public/forms/form_menus/uap_fm.html.

Q8. What financial support is available for patients transported by ambulance?

A8. The Northern Health Travel grant is not available for patients transported by land or air ambulance both ways. However, if a patient travels only one-way by ambulance, he or she may be eligible for a one-way grant.

Q9. Can I refer my patient to any specialist for medical care?

A9. Yes, you can refer your patient to any specialist for medical care, but for purposes of the NHTG program, a specialist is defined as a physician who is certified by the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC) as a medical specialist in a recognized specialty. Grant payment is based on the distance to the closest RCPSC-certified specialist capable of rendering the necessary medical care.