

Bulletin



Bulletin Number	Date	Direct inquiries to
4428	September 15, 2005	Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care Processing Office
Distribution		(address below)
Physicians, Hospitals, Clinics and Laboratories		

Subject: **UPDATE: PRESENTING HEALTH CARDS FOR HEALTH SERVICES**

Every person who is an Ontario resident, as defined in Regulation 552 of the Health Insurance Act, is entitled to apply to become an insured person. An insured person is entitled to receive insured health services (those covered by OHIP) without being charged. It is the person's responsibility to establish their entitlement on a continuing basis and to show their health card to a physician who provides them with an insured service.

If a patient cannot establish that he or she is an insured person, they may be billed for the service. However, health care providers should understand that if they collect payment from the patient, they will be required to later reimburse the patient in full once the patient subsequently establishes that he or she was an insured person at the time the insured service was provided.

The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) offers several services to assist health care providers in determining the status of a patient's Ontario health number and version code. Additional information on these services is attached.

For further information, please contact your local MOHLTC office.

Physician and Hospital Obligation to Perform a Medically Necessary Service

The College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (CPSO) regulates the practice of medicine to protect and serve the public interest, including the maintenance of standards of practice, the investigations of complaints and the discipline of doctors who are determined to be guilty of professional misconduct. While no physician is obliged to accept a new patient, the CPSO has made a regulation under the Medicine Act, 1991 that makes it professional misconduct for a physician to refuse to perform a medically necessary service unless all or part of the fee is paid before the service is performed.

Office locations

Barrie 34 Simcoe St. Suite 102 L4N 6T4	Etobicoke 3300 Bloor St. W., Unit 142 M8X 2W8	Hamilton 119 King St. W 10th fl. P.O. Box 2280, Stn. A L8P 4Y7	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 Station A N6A 5P9
Mississauga 201 City Centre Dr. Suite 300 L5A 2T4	Newmarket 465 Davis Dr. Unit 108 L3Y 8T2	North Bay 101-447 McKeown Ave. P1B 9S9	North York 4400 Dufferin St N Unit A4-A5 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 L1J 7J2	Ottawa Fuller Building 75 Albert Street K1P 5Y9
Owen Sound 1400 1st Ave. W Suite # 2. N4K 6Z9	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	Toronto-Downtown 777 Bay St. Suite M212 M5G 2C8	Windsor 1427 Ouellette Ave. N8X 1K1	Head Office P.O. Box 48 Kingston, ON K7L 5J3	

Hospitals with an emergency department are required to render emergency treatment to any person in need of such services regardless of whether they are insured or not. Also, the Public Hospitals Act requires a hospital to admit a non-resident in a life threatening situation. A person without a valid Health Card should receive emergency treatment if required from a hospital.

HEALTH CARD VALIDATION

The Health Card Validation (HCV) service enables health care providers to determine the status of a health number and version code indicating eligibility/non-eligibility for provincially funded health care services at that point in time thus reducing eligibility and version code claim rejects.

The following information and guidelines will assist you with determining the eligibility and health card/version code status of your patient:

- Ask the patient for their most recent health card at each visit and update your records with any changes. Validate the patient's most recent Health Card at each visit. A client who has recently visited a ministry office to obtain a new health card may have one of the following documents which may be accepted:
 - a hole-punched card for use until receipt of their new card
 - a system generated transaction record showing their health number and new version code

Listed below is a brief summary of the Health Card Validation response codes returned by the ministry when you validate a patient's health card/number:

- Response Codes 0 - 49 indicate that the cardholder is not eligible or without assigned eligibility and can be billed. If billed, the provider upon proof of eligibility must reimburse card holder in full at the time of the service
- Response Codes 50 - 59 indicate that the card holder is eligible and the card is valid
- Response Codes 60 - 89 indicate that the card holder is eligible and the card is not valid (Health Card Release form may be used to obtain correct version code)
- If validation indicates:
 - i) There is no eligibility and/or if you are not reasonably satisfied that the patient is eligible, the patient should be directed to a MOHLTC office where eligibility will be assessed and applied retroactively, if appropriate. The patient may also be billed for the service, however, if billed, the patient is to be reimbursed in full by the provider upon the patient subsequently providing proof of eligibility. When correct information is received, submit the claim to the ministry for payment.
 - ii) There is eligibility, but there is a card validity problem with the card presented or you cannot obtain the correct version code from the patient or the patient's previous records. Direct the patient to contact the MOHLTC office to correct the issue and have the patient complete a Health Number Release form. Submit the Health Number Release form to your local MOHLTC office and in most cases updated information will be made available from the ministry within three days. When correct information is received from the ministry, update the claim with corrected information and submit for payment. If you choose to bill the patient rather than submit a Health Number Release form, the patient is to be reimbursed in full by the provider upon the patient subsequently providing the updated version code to you.
- If the claim is rejected by the ministry for an incorrect or missing version code, obtain correct information (by forwarding a Health Number Release form to your local Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care office) and re-submit the claim within the six-month claim submission period.

Please consult your Interactive Voice Response User's Manual for a detailed listing of the Health Card Validation response codes, their descriptions and recommended actions. Copies of current Interactive Voice Response User's Manual are available by request from the EDT/HCV Technical Helpdesk at 1-800-262-6524.

For additional information on Health Card Validation services please contact the EDT/HCV Technical Help Desk at

1-800-262-6524.

HEALTH NUMBER RELEASE PROCESS

STANDARD PROCESS (For services provided in non-emergency setting):

If the patient cannot produce a health card or there is a version code problem and you cannot obtain the correct version code from the patient or the patient's previous records, have the patient complete a Health Number Release form. In most cases updated information will be made available from the ministry within three days. When correct information is received from the ministry, update the claim with corrected information and submit for payment. If you choose to bill the patient rather than submit a Health Number Release form, the patient is to be reimbursed in full by the provider upon the patient subsequently providing the updated version code to you.

ACCELERATED PROCESS (For services provided in an emergency setting):

The ministry recognizes that physicians providing services in a hospital setting (e.g. emergency departments, radiology, etc.) may have difficulty in acquiring the patient's correct Health Number and version code for payment purposes. Therefore, the ministry implemented an accelerated process for the release of Health Number/version codes to these hospitals/facilities. To comply with Ministry policy, the hospital/facility must acquire the consent of the individual to allow the ministry to release the Health Number or version code. Procedures for this accelerated process require staff to:

- Request that the patient complete a Health Number Release form (1);
- Call the ministry's dedicated 1-800 Emergency Support number (2) where ministry agents will be available on a 24 hour, 7 day a week basis to accept calls specifically to provide requested Health Number/version codes;
- Confirm with the agent that the Health Number Release form has been signed and will be forwarded;
- If only a version code is required, provide the agent with the patient's Health Number and last name;
- If a Health Number is not available, provide the agent with minimal information, that is, last name, sex and either the date of birth or the postal code of the patient – this information is required to identify the patient on the Registered Persons Database;
- Receive the Health Number and/or valid version code, if one is available, from the Help Desk agent during the same telephone conversation;
- Label the Health Number Release form with the ticket number provided by the agent; and Fax the Health Number Release form to the ministry at the provided fax number (2) by 12 o'clock noon the following business day.

If the ministry agent is unable to locate the patient in the Registered Persons Database, the health care facility may choose to bill the patient. The patient is to be reimbursed in full by the facility upon the patient subsequently providing the updated version code.

The ministry will follow up all instances where Health Number Release forms are not faxed as required. Please be aware that failure by a facility to return the form may jeopardize the facility's opportunity to participate in this validation process.

(1) Health Number Release forms can be ordered from:

Reproduction and Stationary Services

99 Adesso Drive

www.gov.on.ca/health/

Concord ON L4K 3C7

Tel: (416) 327-8222

Fax: (416) 327-0329

or download from the ministry's web site

Cat#7530-4626

Form # 1265-84

(2) The appropriate 1-800 Emergency Support number and ministry fax number will be released specifically to the hospital/facility. Their utilization will be logged. Sharing of these numbers for other than the purpose outlined in the agreement could impact on the continuing availability of this service.

Under Part Two of the *Commitment to the Future of Medicare Act 2004*, no person may charge or accept payment or other benefit for rendering an insured service to an insured person except as specifically provided for in the Act. Therefore billing the patient under the following circumstances may be considered to be in contravention of that Act.

- i) Where a health number and current version code is provided by the client at the time of service
- ii) Where a valid health number and current version code is obtainable from your records
- iii) If a patient has been charged for a service as a result of not being able to provide a valid health number or updated version code, if you refuse to reimburse the patient in full once the patient subsequently provides the correct information to you

Under the *Medicine Act*, 1991 it is professional misconduct for a physician to refuse to perform a medically necessary service unless all or part of the fee is paid before the service is performed.