

Bulletin



Bulletin Number 4459	Date October 29, 2007	Direct inquiries to Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care Processing Office (address below)
Distribution Physicians, Hospitals, Clinics and Laboratories		

Subject: Prior Approval for Full Payment of Insured Out-of-Country (OOC) Health Services

Introduction

The *Health Insurance Act* provides that the Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP) make payment for OOC services for insured Ontario citizens in two distinct circumstances:

1. **Emergency Health Services:** The first is for insured Ontario citizens traveling outside Canada. In this situation OHIP covers only emergency health services at limited rates for medical circumstances that are acute and unexpected, arise outside Canada and require immediate treatment. Patients submit their claims to OHIP.
2. **Prior Approval Services:** The second circumstance is the subject of this Bulletin and is for services that are provided outside Canada under arrangements made by prior approval while the patient is in Ontario. The OOC services are requested by the Ontario physician attending the patient. The applicant is approved if the “**Prior Approval Application for Full Payment of Insured Out-of-Country Health Services**” establishes that the services and treatment being requested are:
 - performed at a hospital or licensed health facility;
 - not experimental or for research or for a survey;
 - generally accepted in Ontario as appropriate for a person in the same medical circumstances as the insured person;
 - either not performed in Ontario by an identical or equivalent procedure or
 - performed in Ontario but the insured person must receive the services outside Canada to avoid a delay that would result in death or medically significant irreversible tissue damage.

Prior Approval Process:

Full payment for OOC medical services may be approved by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care when the proposed OOC treatment meets the conditions noted above. The patient’s attending Ontario physician must apply to the ministry before OOC treatment is rendered.

Office locations

Barrie 34 Simcoe St. Suite 201 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 Terminal A N6A 1B7
Mississauga 201 City Centre Dr. P.O. Box 7020, Stn. A L5A 3M1	Newmarket 465 Davis Dr. 3rd floor L3Y 8T2	North Bay 101-447 McKeown St. P1B 9S9	North York 4400 Dufferin St. Unit 4A M3H 6A6	Oakville Oakville Town Centre II 220 North Service Rd. W. Unit P5030. 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 7R4	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. 5th floor M2N 7E7	Windsor 1427 Ouellette Ave. N8X 1K1	Head Office P.O. Box 48 Kingston, ON K7L 5J3		

Please note:

- **The ministry covers costs for insured medical services only.**
- **The ministry does not cover costs associated with travel, medication, food and/or accommodation for patients going out of the country for any prior approved treatment except where provided as part of insured inpatient/outpatient services.**
- **Treatment should not be rendered before a decision letter is received from the ministry.**
- **Prior approval does not cover OOC services that may be provided following discharge of the patient. It is expected that follow-up care will take place in Ontario.**
- **Treatment rendered outside Canada for which the patient has not received written prior approval is not eligible for reimbursement by the ministry.**

Regulations under the *Health Insurance Act* exclude, from insured services, treatment that is generally accepted in Ontario as experimental, for research or a survey, including clinical and drug trials. Physicians must ensure the services requested are considered to be generally acceptable in Ontario as appropriate for a person in the same medical circumstances.

Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB)

If OOC treatment is required as the result of a work-related accident, the prior approval process is not applicable and a form should not be submitted to the ministry. Please contact the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) to discuss coverage as OHIP does not insure services to which a person is entitled under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act* (WSIA). WSIB may be contacted directly at:

The Workplace Safety and Insurance Board 200 Front Street West Toronto, Ontario M5V 3J1	Telephone: (416) 344-1000 Toll Free: 1-800-387-5540 Ontario Toll Free: 1-800-387-0750 TTY: 1-800-387-0050. Fax: 416-344-4684 or 1-888-313-7373
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Requesting Prior Approval for Out-of-Country Health Services

The attached form entitled “**Prior Approval Application for Full Payment of Insured Out-of-Country Health Services**” is to be used by Ontario physicians to request prior approval for funding of insured out-of-country medical services for their patients. Also attached is an instruction sheet to aid in completion of the application form. The form is also available on the ministry’s website at:

http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/providers/forms/form_menus/ohip_prof_fm.html

(Form #1442-84)

Please note – this form is not for use when requesting services in other provinces throughout Canada.

The form must be completed by a practising Ontario physician and submitted to the ministry before any OOC health services are rendered. If health services are rendered before adjudication of the application has been completed by the ministry, these health services are not eligible for reimbursement. **NOTE: Submission of an application to the ministry does not guarantee approval of the requested/proposed service.** A decision letter will be sent to the referring Ontario physician and copied to the patient once the application has been adjudicated by the ministry.

Completion of Application

Completed applications must be forwarded to the Out-of-Country Unit, Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, 370 Select Drive, P.O. Box 168, Kingston, Ontario K7M 8T4. In emergency situations, applications can be faxed to 1-613-536-3181.

In order to assist ministry staff in the assessment of applications, Parts 1 to 5 of the application **must** be completed by the referring Ontario physician. Additional clinical information and pertinent medical records in support of the application should also be appended. Please note that incomplete forms or those missing supporting medical documentation will be returned (by fax) to the attending physician, delaying the adjudication of the application. OOC treatment should not be rendered until a decision letter from the ministry has been received.

Physicians cannot bill either the patient or OHIP for the completion of the form under Regulation 552 of the *Health Insurance Act*.

CritiCall and Emergency Room Referrals

In exceptional emergency circumstances, it may not be possible for the attending emergency room physician to provide necessary medical care at the treating hospital in Ontario. Where acute or life-threatening circumstances require services that are not available in the treating hospital, the attending physician must contact CritiCall at 1-800-668-4357 to see if there is a suitable treatment bed at another Ontario hospital before sending the patient OOC. If CritiCall is not able to transfer the patient within Ontario, CritiCall can arrange transport to an OOC facility. The emergency room physician must still submit the prior approval application (within 24 hours) to the ministry on behalf of the patient. Contact or learn more about the CritiCall program at: www.criticalcall.com

If CritiCall is not involved and circumstances demand an immediate referral to an OOC hospital to provide emergency care not available in Ontario, the referring Ontario emergency room physician is advised to act in the best interest of the patient and must submit a prior approval application with supporting medical documents within 24 hours of the OOC referral or on the first working day following the referral. The application should document that either the required services were not available in Ontario or that the time required to access treatment in Ontario represented a threat to the patient in terms of loss of life or medically significant irreversible tissue damage.

The attending physician should contact the Out Of Country Unit in Kingston at 1-888-359-8807 during normal business hours to provide medical information regarding the necessity for emergency OOC treatment. A prior approval application form is still required before funding approval can be considered.

If you would like information or clarification regarding this program, please contact the ministry by telephone at 1-888-359-8807, or send an e-mail to: OOCPriorApprovalInq.moh@ontario.ca. Telephone calls will be returned within 24 hours during normal business hours.

Ministry funding is provided for emergent services only. Patients must be transferred back to Ontario as soon as their condition has stabilized. If CritiCall was involved in the initial OOC transfer, then CritiCall will assist in arranging the patient's return to Ontario. Other patients, including those discharged independently, are responsible for arranging their own return to Ontario as soon as it is medically safe to do so for continuation and completion of treatment. All future follow up care should be arranged and provided in Ontario.

Monitoring & Review

The ministry closely monitors our out of country service approvals and works closely with the Ontario health care system providers to create capacity in Ontario as appropriate.

Website

The ministry is currently developing a website that will provide further information about this program at: <http://www.health.gov.on.ca>. When operational, users will be able to click an "Out-of-Country" icon that will direct them to program specific information and related links. Additional information will be provided regarding this initiative in the near future.

PRIOR APPROVAL FOR FULL PAYMENT OF INSURED OUT-OF-COUNTRY (OOC) HEALTH SERVICES

COMPLETION INSTRUCTIONS

Introduction

The form is required to request prior approval for full payment by the ministry for insured **OOC hospital/medical services** on behalf of your patient. The ministry does not cover travel and accommodation costs associated with traveling out of country for prior approved treatment.

If treatment has already been rendered, **do not complete this form** as services will be deemed ineligible for reimbursement in accordance with section 28.4(5) of O/Reg 552 under the *Health Insurance Act*.

Application forms are available on the ministry's website at:

http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/providers/forms/form_menus/ohip_prof_fm.html

These forms are available in a fill and print format or can be downloaded for completion. A sample form is also attached which can be photocopied as required. Completed forms may be sent to the ministry by **fax: (613) 536-3181**.

Full payment of hospital/medical services will be authorized only when the proposed OOC treatment or procedure is:

- performed at a hospital or licensed health facility;
- not experimental or for research or for a survey;
- generally accepted in Ontario as appropriate for a person in the same medical circumstances as the insured person;
- either not performed in Ontario by an identical or equivalent procedure; or
- performed in Ontario but the insured person must receive the services outside Canada to avoid a delay that would result in death or medically significant irreversible tissue damage.

Top left corner of form:

The first question to be answered is whether the OOC treatment is required as a result of a work-related accident. If the answer to this question is "yes", **do not complete this form**.

If the answer is "no", all sections of this form must be completed by the patient's physician who is making the OOC referral. Please ensure that all sections of the form are legible. If the form cannot be read, it will be returned by fax asking for clarification of the information.

Part 1 – Patient Information

When completing this section, the Ontario physician's office should verify that the patient's health number and address are correct.

If the patient is under the age of 16, the parent or legal guardian must sign on the patient's behalf.

Part 2 – Referring Ontario Physician

The provider number refers to the physician's OHIP billing number.

The remainder of this section must include the clinical diagnosis or diagnoses in full, names of other Ontario health professionals consulted (attaching relevant consultation notes), the proposed treatment being requested OOC, type of service being requested and, if inpatient, how many days anticipated and the planned admission date, if known.

If the patient is being referred OOC for an extended period of time, the Ontario physician should also provide the reasons for the lengthy admission.

Part 3 – Proposed Out-of-Country Health Facility/Hospital

This section must be fully completed.

Part 4A – for Treatment performed in Ontario

This section establishes the need for the patient to be referred outside Canada and all criteria described in the *Health Insurance Act* must be met for the application to be approved.

The first two questions establish whether the treatment being requested is appropriate for a person in the same medical circumstances as the patient and whether the service is performed in Ontario by an identical or equivalent procedure.

The next two questions establish whether the treatment must be performed OOC to avoid a delay which would result in death or medically significant irreversible tissue damage. At least one of these questions must be answered “yes”. A “no” answer to each of these questions indicates that there is no urgent need for the patient to go OOC for treatment.

It is expected that the referring Ontario physician will have attempted to find treatment for his/her patient in Ontario and will provide the names of all health professionals contacted in this regard. There are no geographical limitations described in the *Health Insurance Act* relating to the travel distance required to obtain treatment in Ontario.

If the patient was transferred OOC by CritiCall, the appropriate box should be checked. It should NOT be checked if a call was placed to CritiCall and then the transfer made without giving CritiCall the opportunity to find treatment in Ontario.

The last four questions are specific to transplant, cancer, cardiac and substance abuse patients.

Part 4B – for Treatment not performed in Ontario

This section is only to be completed if the treatment requested is not performed anywhere in Ontario. It should not be completed if treatment is available that is equivalent or identical to that being sought OOC. This section should not be completed if the reason for OOC treatment is related to wait times.

Part 5 – Follow-up Care

Completion of this section is required to confirm that the patient’s follow-up care will be provided in Ontario and not by the OOC physician.

Signatures

This application form must be signed and dated by both the patient and the referring Ontario physician.