

INFOBulletin

Keeping health care providers informed of payment, policy or program changes

To: Optometrists

Published by: Claims Services Branch, Ministry of Health

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Re: COVID-19 Advance Payment Program

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The Ministry of Health (ministry) recognizes that optometrists are essential partners in the fight against COVID-19. The ministry is committed to working with optometrists who have been affected by the outbreak, including those who are unable to deliver their regular types of OHIP insured services during this time.

The ministry is establishing an advance payment program to provide payments to eligible optometrists to address any cash flow issues that may arise during the COVID-19 outbreak. This will ensure optometrists have funding available to sustain their practices during this difficult time and enable them to return to regular practice as soon as the outbreak begins to subside.

The COVID-19 Advance Payment Program will provide monthly, interest-free, automated advance payments that will be set off against future OHIP payments to individual optometrists. Payments assessed over the previous 12 months (April 1, 2019 to March 31, 2020) were examined, and a monthly average was determined based on payments for that period. The program will automatically top up optometrists' payments to 70% of this average. Optometrists who are eligible for advance payments will automatically receive these payments in May, June and July 2020.

By accepting the advance payment, providers are deemed to agree with the terms and conditions regarding set off against future OHIP payments. These are as follows:

- Recovery of advance payments will be made from a provider's future OHIP payments beginning in November 2020;

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- The total amount of the advance payments will be recovered in five equal installments against future OHIP payments from November 2020 to March 2021; and
- No interest will be applied.

For providers that do not wish to accept payment under these terms and conditions, funds can be returned to the ministry. Providers may return their advance payment by submitting a cheque to the:

Financial Management Branch
49 Place d'Armes, 3rd Floor
Kingston, Ontario K7L 5J3

The cheque is to be made payable to the Minister of Finance. Providers should also indicate this cheque is for the re-payment of the advance payment, including the specified month.

For any further inquiries or to discuss other repayment options, please contact the Service Support Contact Centre at: 1-800-262-6524 or SSContactCentre.MOH@ontario.ca.