



June 2017

Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) Program Update

Informing First Nations and Inuit clients, as well as their representative organizations, about their coverage and NIHB policy changes

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Medical Transportation

Escorts for Pregnant Women

The NIHB Program has expanded the medical transportation benefit to ensure that all pregnant women who require transportation outside the community to deliver their babies are eligible for an escort.

To find out more, contact the Medical Transportation Coordinator in your community or contact NIHB at your [Health Canada regional office \(www.hc-sc.gc.ca/contact/fniah-spnia/fnih-spni/nihbr-ssnar-eng.php\)](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/contact/fniah-spnia/fnih-spni/nihbr-ssnar-eng.php).

Pharmacy Benefit Information

Medications for Treatment of Hepatitis C

The NIHB Program has added new medications for the treatment of chronic hepatitis C. To improve access, the Program has also expanded the coverage criteria so that more clients can obtain these treatments. Effective March 31, 2017, the NIHB Program covers the following medications as limited use (LU) benefits:

- Harvoni (ledipasvir/sofosbuvir)
- Sovaldi (sofosbuvir)
- Epclusa (sofosbuvir/velpatasvir)
- Zepatier (elbasvir/grazoprevir)
- Daklinza (daclatasvir)
- Sunvepra (asunaprevir)
- Ibavyr (ribavirin)

The expanded coverage criteria for these medications can be found in the [NIHB Drug Benefit List \(www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fniah-spnia/nihb-ssna/provide-fournir/pharma-prod/med-list/index-eng.php\)](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fniah-spnia/nihb-ssna/provide-fournir/pharma-prod/med-list/index-eng.php). If you have been diagnosed with hepatitis C, talk to your health care provider about your treatment options.

Infliximab for Treatment of Autoimmune Conditions

Infliximab is a type of medication used to treat some autoimmune conditions and diseases, such as rheumatoid arthritis, Crohn's disease and psoriasis. Previously, the only infliximab product reimbursed by NIHB was Remicade. NIHB has recently listed a second infliximab product, called Inflectra. Inflectra is 'bio-similar' to Remicade, which means that studies have shown these medications work in the same way, and have similar effectiveness.

Effective May 1, 2017, adult clients with new prescriptions for an infliximab medication, who meet NIHB's coverage criteria, will be covered for Inflectra (instead of Remicade). Clients who are already taking Remicade will continue to be covered for their current medication.

NIHB coverage for infliximab follows recommendations from the national Common Drug Review Process (CDR), which reviews medical evidence and provides recommendations to public drug benefit plans and programs in Canada. The CDR has recommended that Inflectra should be covered because this product is similarly effective and has a lower cost, compared to other infliximab medications.

Dental Benefit Information

Frequency Change for Scaling and Root Planing for Children

Effective April 1, 2017, the NIHB Program has changed the frequency of coverage for scaling and root planing for children 0 to 16 years of age.

	Previous frequency	New frequency
0-11 years	0.5 unit in any 6 month period	1 unit in any 12 month period
12-16 years	1 unit in any 6 month period	2 units in any 12 month period

Dental scaling is a procedure done to remove plaque from a tooth's surface, just below the gumline. Root planing is a procedure done deeper under the gumline to clean the surface of the root of the tooth.

Dental providers bill for these services based on units of time; one unit is equivalent to fifteen minutes of time. The number of units eligible annually has not changed, however the frequency period has changed from 6 months to 12 months to allow providers and clients more flexibility to provide the service as needed.

Predetermination is not required for services provided within these frequency guidelines. For additional units above the annual maximum, a predetermination (PD) is required.

Increased Coverage for Sealants and Preventive Resin Restorations

Effective June 23, 2017, the NIHB Program will increase its coverage for sealants and preventive resin restorations (which are thin plastic coatings applied on the chewing surface of the tooth to prevent tooth decay):

- Coverage for sealants and preventive resin restorations has been extended to include bicuspid.
- The age limit for coverage of these services has been increased from 14 to 18 years of age.
- There is a lifetime limit of 2 sealants/preventive resin restorations per eligible tooth.

The [Dental Benefits Guide](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fniah-spnia/pubs/nihb-ssna/_dent/2017-guide/index-eng.php) (www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fniah-spnia/pubs/nihb-ssna/_dent/2017-guide/index-eng.php) will be updated to reflect these changes. Please refer to the most recent version of the Guide for a complete listing of dental benefits and policies.

Reminder – Submitting Dental Benefit Appeals

To avoid delays in processing your dental benefits appeal, and to ensure confidentiality of the information provided, please remember to label your envelope and your appeal letter "APPEAL-CONFIDENTIAL". More information on the NIHB dental appeal process can be found on [Health Canada's website \(www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/non-insured-health-benefits-first-nations-inuit/appealing-decision-under-non-insured-health-benefits/page-4-submit-appeal-dental-benefits-orthodontic-services.html\)](http://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/non-insured-health-benefits-first-nations-inuit/appealing-decision-under-non-insured-health-benefits/page-4-submit-appeal-dental-benefits-orthodontic-services.html).

Medical Supplies and Equipment

Frequency Change for Hearing Aid Battery Coverage

Effective June 19, 2017, clients may receive up to 24 batteries every 144 days (previously, the Program covered up to 15 batteries in 90 days). Hearing aid batteries are available in different package sizes, so this change allows for more flexibility to use larger package sizes.

Increased Reimbursement for Custom-Made Foot Orthotics

The NIHB Program has recently increased the reimbursement rate for a pair of custom-made foot orthotics and will now pay up to a maximum of \$456.30 (unless the price is otherwise subject to an agreement between a provider association and the NIHB Program). You can check the [Guide for MS&E Benefits \(www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fniah-spnia/pubs/nihb-ssna/medequip/2017-equipement-medical-fournitures-medicales/index-eng.php\)](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fniah-spnia/pubs/nihb-ssna/medequip/2017-equipement-medical-fournitures-medicales/index-eng.php) for more information on who can prescribe and provide custom-made foot orthotics.

As a reminder, prior approval is not required for a pair of custom-made foot orthotics because this requirement has been temporarily lifted until October, 2017. Replacement of custom-made foot orthotics is eligible every two years. If you are not sure of the date you are eligible for replacement, ask your provider to contact Express Scripts Canada, or you can call NIHB at the [Health Canada regional office \(www.hc-sc.gc.ca/contact/fniah-spnia/fnih-spni/nihbr-ssnar-eng.php\)](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/contact/fniah-spnia/fnih-spni/nihbr-ssnar-eng.php) to confirm your eligibility.

Provider Charges for Medical Supplies and Equipment Benefits

Many providers of MS&E benefits are enrolled with NIHB and are paid directly by the Program for eligible products and service provided to NIHB clients. When providers enrol with the Program, they sign an agreement which states that they will not charge any additional fees to NIHB clients.

To avoid out-of-pocket charges, NIHB recommends that you contact your MS&E provider before you receive an item or service to confirm that the provider is registered with NIHB and will bill the Program directly, that the item or service is fully covered by NIHB, and that the provider will not charge you any additional fees.

NIHB Client Inquiries – General

Alberta	1-780-495-3302 (Main reception) Toll-free: 1-800-232-7301
Atlantic	Toll-free: 1-800-565-3294
British Columbia	First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) Toll free: 1-800-317-7878
Manitoba	Toll-free: 1-800-665-8507
Northwest Territories/Nunavut	Toll-free: 1-888-332-9222
Ontario	Toll-free: 1-800-640-0642
Quebec	1-514-283-1575 Toll-free: 1-877-483-1575
Saskatchewan	Toll free: 1-866-885-3933
Yukon	Toll-free: 1-866-362-6717

NIHB Client Inquiries – Dental and Orthodontic Services

NIHB Dental Predetermination Centre	Toll-Free: 1-855-618-6291 (Dental Services)
	Toll-Free: 1-866-227-0943 (Orthodontic Services)