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MEDICAL TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM



Terms and Conditions

Program extended to March 31, 2025

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Authority	3
Purpose	3
Objectives	3
Confidentiality	3
Program Overview	3
What is the NCC ikajuKatigek Medical Transportation Program (MTP)?	3
Eligible Individuals	4
Eligible Travel Expenses	4
Eligible Services	5
Coordinated Travel	6
Escort	6
Escort Eligibility Criteria	6
Exceptions for Two Escorts	7
Guidelines for Choosing an Escort	7
How the Program Works	8
Advance Notice	8
Pre-approval Process	8
Cancellation of Appointments	8
Reimbursement of Travel Expenses	9
Travel Rates	9
Appointments	9
Appeal Process	9
Compliments and Complaints	10
Claim Period	10

AUTHORITY

The NunatuKavut Community Council's (NCC) authority to make contributions under the ikajuKatigek (ik/ga/you/hot/de/geek) Medical Transportation Program (MTP) is guided by a resolution approved by the NCC Governing Council at a duly convened Council meeting on March 23, 2024.

PURPOSE

To provide financial support to full members of NCC who incur out-of-pocket travel costs to access specialized medical services that are not available in their immediate place of residence. NCC will provide navigation services to maximize supports under this program and other available programs and services.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the NCC MTP are to:

1. Provide financial support to full members of NCC while traveling for medical purposes;
2. Provide clear direction to all full members of NCC regarding the process to apply for medical transportation support;
3. Provide a seamless transition and support to assist full members in navigating the application and reimbursement processes; and
4. Adhere to budgetary requirements for this program.

CONFIDENTIALITY

NCC is committed to providing strict confidentiality related to all information obtained, whether written or verbal, relating to the administration of the NCC MTP. NCC staff who will be supporting and administering the NCC MTP program will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement. Failure to adhere to the confidentiality agreement will result in either employee dismissal and/or legal action.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

What is the NCC ikajuKatigek Medical Transportation Program (MTP)?

The NCC ikajuKatigek MTP is a program intended to provide financial support to eligible full members of NCC to help alleviate some of the travel costs incurred to access specialized insured medical services. Translated from Inuttitut, ikajuKatigek means helping one another and is reflective of NCC's vision of governing ourselves, providing and caring for one another, our families and our communities while nurturing our relationship with our lands and waters.

The maximum annual amounts that can be accessed through the NCC MTP are up to \$5,000 per patient and up to \$7,000 per patient, with escort(s). These amounts are renewed as of April 1 each fiscal year, budget permitting.

Full members who are receiving provincial income supports are required to seek assistance under the provincial Income Support program first. In circumstances where income supports do not meet the daily per diem amounts covered by the NCC MTP program, rates may be topped up to the amount provided by NCC's program (e.g. meals).

Eligible Individuals

To be eligible for the NCC MTP, the individual must meet the following criteria:

- You must be a Canadian resident and be a full member of NCC with a current membership card;
- You must have a referral from a physician, nurse practitioner or regional/community nurse for insured medical services within your province or territory which are not available at your immediate place of residence; and
- Your travel expenses must not be covered by a third-party insurance, such as an employer plan, extended medical plan, or federal government program (e.g. Non-Insured Health Benefits, Veterans' Affairs, etc.).

The referral must be made to the closest location utilizing the most efficient means of transportation, consistent with the urgency of the situation and medical condition of the patient.

The full member is required to disclose all other sources of travel assistance (e.g. government sources, insurance, etc.) when applying. Failure to disclose money received from private insurance or any other sources for claims submitted to NCC MTP may result in recovery of the assistance provided or denial of any future requests.

Eligible Travel Expenses

Full members who need to travel in order to access specialized insured medical services not available in their immediate area of residence may be eligible to apply for financial assistance under NCC MTP. The most efficient and economical mode of transportation consistent with the urgency of the situation and patient's medical condition is to be used at all times. Patients and/or families who choose another mode of transportation not pre-approved by NCC MTP will be responsible to pay the difference in the cost between the two.

The medical travel benefits include:

- **Airfare** (and related eligible taxi fares);
- **Private vehicle usage** (up to an amount incurred by either a commercial airfare ticket or schedevac voucher);
- **Living expenses** (such as registered and/or private accommodations and related meal allowance);
- **Bussing and use of ferries** (based on program criteria); and

- **Emergency transportation** (such as ambulance by air or ground).

When a member is approved for medical transportation under the NCC MTP and the member chooses to use an alternate mode of transportation, the member will be responsible for the full up-front cost and will be reimbursed at rates consistent with the rate paid by NCC.

Salaries for doctors or nurses accompanying the patient on an ambulance or medivac are not covered.

Eligible Services

The following specialized insured medical services **are eligible** for the NCC MTP:

- Non-emergency medical services, defined as insured services by provincial or territorial health plans, such as:
 - Appointments with physicians or specialists;
 - Emergency room visits;
 - Hospital care (inpatient or day surgery).
- Services covered by provincial or territorial health plans, such as:
 - Diagnostic tests;
 - Medical treatments.
- Publicly funded alcohol, solvent, drug abuse and detox treatment
- Vision (non-routine)
- Dental (non-routine, non-cosmetic)
- Mental health counselling

The following services **are not eligible** for NCC MTP:

- Travel for an appointment where the appropriate health services are available locally;
- Compassionate travel;
- Supplementary benefit practitioner services (e.g. acupuncturist, massage therapy, podiatry, naturopathy, and chiropractic services);
- Non-insured services (e.g. cosmetic surgery, experimental procedures, clinical drug trials, preventative medicine, international travel medicine, fertility, etc.);
- Travel to appointments outside of Canada (unless the patient is referred by the provincial/territorial health care authority for medically required health services to a facility outside of Canada when such services are covered by the provincial/territorial health care plan but the medical transportation benefits are not covered);
- Travel to pick up new or repeated prescriptions, vision care or medical supply and equipment products where a fitting is not required;
- Appointments for members in the care of a federal, provincial or territorial institution (e.g. incarcerated);
- Court-ordered treatment and/or assessment, or as a condition of parole, coordinated by the justice system;

- Travel for members who are admitted to either a long-term care or personal care home who wish to travel home for visits (e.g. holiday pass);
- Weight loss clinics;
- Travel related to a workplace injury and/or accident where Worker's Compensation is involved;
- Travel for the purposes of a third-party requested medical examination (e.g. medical certificate for employment);
- Transportation for adult daycare and/or respite care; and
- Special camps for children.

Coordinated Travel

When one or more patient is travelling to the same location, where practical and economical, appointments and travel arrangements will be coordinated to ensure optimum cost-effectiveness.

When more than one medically required service is required in a week and/or more than one family member needs to access a medically required service in the same week, where practical and economical, appointments and travel arrangements will be scheduled for the same day to ensure optimal cost-effectiveness.

When more than one medically required service is required in a week, where practical and economical, the patient may be required to stay and wait for subsequent appointments versus returning home in between appointments.

When more than one patient is travelling in the same vehicle, the rate reimbursed will be for one trip only.

Escort

Travel expenses incurred by an escort may also be eligible for assistance when the referring physician, nurse practitioner or regional/community nurse has provided documentation indicating an escort is required. If an escort is required, the escort is expected to share the same accommodations as the medically referred patient unless the patient is hospitalized or is undergoing a procedure that requires separate accommodations to protect the escort's safety (e.g. radioactive treatments).

NCC must preauthorize the approval of an escort. The escort and accompanying expenses must originate from the patient's home residence. The length of time the escort is approved will be determined by the patient's medical condition or legal requirements.

NCC will not provide escorts with a payment of a fee, honorarium or salary to accompany a medically referred patient.

Escort Eligibility Criteria

The provision of an escort may be approved for eligibility under the NCC MTP where there is a legal or medical requirement that results in the patient being unable to travel alone. Request for an escort requires documentation from medical professional in the following circumstances:

- To accompany a minor who is accessing medically required health services;
- Patient requires assistance with activities of daily living (*specific details are required in all cases*);
- Patient is undergoing a medical procedure (e.g. outpatient general anesthetic) or has a medical condition that will result in the patient requiring assistance during the trip;
- Where the patient is medically incapacitated;
- Where the patient is declared, by the attending physician, to be mentally or socially incompetent;
- Where a functional literacy barrier exists;
- To receive instructions on specific and essential home medical/nursing procedures that cannot be given to the client only;
- The patient is a pregnant woman whose trip is for the purpose of childbirth (including being closer to care while awaiting childbirth);
- Where a breastfed infant is accompanying his/her mother, who is the patient, and the child requires care during the mother's medical appointment and/or procedure(s);
- Where the patient has been diagnosed as requiring palliative care outside of their community as indicated on the patient referral; and
- Where a patient has been diagnosed with Cancer and is travelling for diagnostic testing and/or treatments (*this excludes regular routine follow-up appointments*).

Exceptions for Two Escorts

The NCC MTP will only provide financial assistance for one escort per patient. Exceptions may be considered to provide two escorts in the following situations:

- Twins who are minors who have separate appointment visits;
- When a patient's medical stay is two weeks or longer and the original escort requests a change out (this will be a one-time exception per medical stay); and
- Family requests two escorts in the circumstances such as a near death accident, etc.

NCC will consider other situations on a case-by-case basis.

Guidelines for Choosing an Escort

When an escort is approved, the patient and family should use the following as guidelines when selecting an escort:

- Able to sign a consent form or provide a patient history;
- Able to provide the required physical and/or required care to meet the patient's needs (and not requiring assistance themselves);
- Comfortable with attending medical appointments and understanding medical terminology;
- Able to drive if the role includes providing ground transportation; and
- Comfortable and able to share physical space with the medically referred patient.

HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS

NCC will have trained staff available to administer the NCC MTP to March 31, 2025. The staff will assess member eligibility for the NCC MTP based on the eligibility criteria outlined above. All members must obtain pre-approval for medical travel and provide proof of appointment (unless in the case of a medical emergency). Once an application is approved, the member can choose one of the following options:

1. NCC staff will arrange all transportation and associated travel expenses on behalf of the member; or
2. Member will independently arrange transportation along with associated travel expenses and submit a medical transportation reimbursement claim, with receipts.

Advance Notice

If NCC is booking medical travel on behalf of the member, please notify one of NCC's Medical Transportation Officers at least 10 business days in advance to allow for the processing of the approval form. This means reaching out as early as possible to start the application process.

Pre-approval Process

To obtain pre-approval for the NCC MTP, the member must complete the NCC MTP *Medical Transportation Approval Form* and provide documented proof of the medical appointment and/or procedure along with proof of appointment. If an escort is required, the *Medical Transportation Escort Referral Form* must also be completed and signed by a physician, nurse practitioner or regional/community nurse and submitted with the application for consideration. Once the completed NCC MTP *Medical Transportation Approval Form* and accompanying documentation has been reviewed, the patient will be contacted and advised of the outcome of their application submission.

If a patient requires follow up treatment or additional medical travel to obtain medically insured services, NCC will require that a separate NCC MTP *Medical Transportation Approval Form* be completed and submitted for pre-approval.

It is important to note that expenses such as personal care items, utilities (e.g. laundry), telephone charges, room damage, movie or game rentals, room service, tips, gratuities, etc. are not eligible expenses under the NCC MTP.

Cancellation of Appointments

If medical appointments are cancelled (or the member is unable to attend), please notify the booked airline and hotel providers **immediately**, followed by NCC's Medical Transportation Program Officers. Failure to do so can result in financial loss for the Medical Transportation Program, including the annual budget allocation for each member.

Reimbursement of Travel Expenses

Members who independently choose to arrange transportation and accompanying travel expenses are responsible to submit a completed and signed medical transportation reimbursement claim along with receipts. Members will have 30 days after their current medical travel has ended to submit their claims. All claims submitted past this date may be rejected.

TRAVEL RATES

NCC will make every effort to negotiate transportation and accommodation rates with vendors. Travel and associated expenses will be paid at a maximum rate as outlined below:

- **Airfare:** Economy Flex (or similar) ticket
- **Schedevac:** proof of voucher required
- **Registered hotel, registered Air B&B and/or hostel:** up to a maximum of \$150.00 per night
- **Private accommodations:** \$50.00 per night
- **Private vehicle usage:** \$0.30 per kilometer
- **Meal rates:**
 - Breakfast: \$15.00
 - Lunch: \$15.00
 - Supper: \$25.00

NOTE: *Children under the age of six months are not entitled to meal per diems.*

- **Baggage claim:** receipts required
- **Public Parking:** receipts required

APPOINTMENTS

When accessing the NCC MTP, confirmation that the full member has an appointment for a medical insured health service must be obtained from a health professional and submitted to the NCC along with the completed NCC MTP *Medical Transportation Approval Form*. In the case of an emergency, documentation is required by a medical professional.

In the case where a patient does not attend a scheduled appointment or does not complete the course of treatment prescribed by the medical professional, the member will assume the cost of the return trip unless there is justified documentation provided to explain why the client was unable to attend the appointment (e.g. health service delivery delays, severe weather, family or personal emergencies, etc.).

APPEAL PROCESS

When a request for medical transportation is denied, an appeal process is available. Appeals must be initiated by the patient or by a designate acting on their behalf. To submit a claim, the member must complete the *Medical Transportation Appeal form* and submit to the Health and Social Department Manager for internal review and decision. Submissions for appeals that are explicit ineligible benefits are not eligible for an appeal (e.g. weight loss clinic). Appeals are meant to deal

with issues related to policies and procedures only. A written response will be provided to the member following the appeal process outlining the decision within four (4) weeks from the date of receipt. All decisions made by the appeals committee are final.

COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS

NCC strives to deliver high-quality services to every full member. To ensure a high standard of quality service delivery, compliments and constructive feedback are encouraged to help with evaluation and enhancing program delivery.

NCC will accept complaints and investigate the details of all submitted complaints. NCC will not deal with complaints associated with medical services. Complaints associated with provision of medical services are the responsibility of the member and/or their family.

In the case of a designate acting on behalf of a member, NCC must have the written consent of the member to communicate with the designate on his or her behalf.

Once a complaint is received, the responsible manager will have four (4) weeks from the date of receipt to respond in writing regarding the outcome of the investigation.

CLAIM PERIOD

Only pre-approved claims for this program will be accepted to March 31, 2025. Full members of NCC who have their travel pre-approved during this timeframe, but have not yet submitted a claim, will have 30 days after travel to submit receipts for payment. Beyond this 30-day period, the approved claim may be considered void as funding for the NCC MTP may no longer be available.