

Frequently Asked Questions

Medical Travel

The following information is not intended as a substitute to the Medical Travel Policy or associated guidelines. The Medical Travel Policy and associated guidelines are available on the Department of Health's official web site www.health.gov.nu.ca.

Why do we have medical travel?

The Canada Health Act states that all citizens should have equal access to health care. In Nunavut, access to health care services that are not available in the home communities involves travel by air. The Department of Health provides travel benefits to eligible clients who must travel in order to access necessary health services.

Who does the medical travel policy apply to?

The medical travel policy applies to all residents of Nunavut with a valid Nunavut health care card and a referral from a Nunavut practitioner.

What benefits are covered?

The Department of Health pays for airfare less a co-payment of \$125.00 each way. The Department will make the travel arrangements for airfare and in some cases for accommodations. The level of assistance is based upon the client's ability to access other insurance programs not covered by this policy.

For example:

- Non-insured Health Benefits Program;
- Extended Health Benefits Program;
- Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission;
- Public Service Health Care Plan;
- Government of Nunavut Employees Dental and Health Benefits Plan; and
- Private Insurance Plans

What is an Approved Centre?

An 'Approved Centre' means a hospital, clinic, birthing centre, regional health facility or rehabilitation centre approved by the Government of Nunavut's Department of Health for the provision of health services that are not available in a client's home community. The Approved Centre will be the nearest centre where the services required by the client are available. For example, if a Baffin client requires a procedure that is available in Ottawa, Winnipeg or Edmonton, the nearest centre will be Ottawa.

What terms should I understand?

Client – a person who must travel in order to access health services.

Medical Travel – authorized travel between Nunavut communities and/or Approved Centres outside of Nunavut for the purpose of obtaining health services that are not available in a client's home community. It is important to understand that medical travel benefits are only provided to the nearest Approved Centre.

Nunavut practitioner – means an individual who is licensed to deliver health services in Nunavut through employment or contract with the Government of Nunavut. These include nurses, physicians, and midwives. Within this policy dental providers are not considered Nunavut practitioners.

A Nunavut practitioner determines the care that a client requires and initiates a referral to the nearest Approved Centre where the appropriate care is available. A Nunavut Practitioner may recommend an escort accompany a client on his or her medical travel, subject to the approval of a Regional Director.

Regional Director – means a Regional Director of Health Services, the Executive Director of Iqaluit Health Services or their designate.

When does my approved travel start? end?

Approved travel will begin on the flight immediately prior to your appointment. Once cleared to return home, you will be returned to your originating community through the most economical transportation mode available immediately after your final appointment.



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Who can request a client escort?

It is the responsibility of the client or their guardian to initiate a request for a client escort. The Nunavut Practitioner will state his or her support or the reason why he/she does not support your request. The request will be approved by the regional Department of Health office. A client escort may or may not be approved for the full duration of the client's stay.

Who can be a client escort?

The client escort must be an adult 19 or older. A Nunavut practitioner in consultation with the client or guardian recommends a client escort. The client escort must agree to, and sign, the client and escort travel agreement. For longer treatment requirements a client escort must be able to stay with the client for a minimum of four weeks before returning to his or her home community. **After a four week period, a client escort may submit a request to a the regional Department of Health office to travel home and a new client escort may be authorized.**

A client escort cannot bring an infant. Client escorts with a history of not following the standards in the client travel agreement may not be selected as client escorts in the future.

When is a client escort approved?

A client escort will be authorized when:

- There is a need for legal consent by a parent or guardian;
- The client has a mental or physical condition of a nature that he or she is not able to travel without additional assistance; or
- A unilingual Inuit language speaking client requires travel to an Approved Centre where interpretive services are not available. The client escort will be required to speak both the client's language and English; or
- The client escort will participate in the client's treatment program and receive instructions on specific and essential home medical nursing procedures that cannot be given to the client only.

Are the client escort expenses covered?

- An escort is covered for the most economical airfare to and from the nearest Approved Centre;

What can I do if I was denied medical travel or an escort?

A client or guardian has the right to appeal the denial of medical travel benefits under the health services Medical Travel Policy. There is only one level of appeal and all appeals must be submitted in writing by the client or guardian. All appeals must be submitted using the appeal request form and submitted to a Regional Director. Appeal request forms are available at the local health facility or attached to the Policy on the official Health website.

A client or guardian has 60 days from the receipt of a denial decision to submit a completed appeal request form. The applicable Regional Director or designate will review the appeal, make a decision and advise the client or guardian within 10 business days of receiving the appeal. The decision is final and there are no further levels of appeal.

Where can I find more information?

The medical travel policy and associated guidelines are available on the Department of Health website or by contacting the Department of Health at:

Medical Travel Offices

• Baffin Medical Travel Office
P.O. Box 1000, Stn 1046
Iqaluit NU X0A 0H0
Toll Free Line 1-866-371-3305
Phone 1-867-975-5759
Fax 1-867-975-5964

• Kivalliq Region
1-867-645-4336

• Kitikmeot Region
(867) 983-4506,
or (867) 983-5196 after hours.

www.health.gov.nu.ca

