

For our Medical Supplies and Equipment Providers

Spring 2007

NEWS AND VIEWS

Welcome to the spring 2007 edition of the Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) quarterly newsletter. First Canadian Health (FCH) is now in its ninth year of operations as the claims processor for the NIHB Program of the First Nations and Inuit Health Branch (FNIHB) of Health Canada.

Again, FCH would like to thank you for your support as you continue to provide quality health services to First Nations and Inuit clients of the NIHB Program.

As always, your comments and questions are welcome. Please contact the FCH NIHB Toll-Free Inquiry Centre at **1-888-471-1111**, or send your correspondence to:

FCH Provider Relations
3080 Yonge Street, Suite 3002
Toronto, ON M4N 3N1

NUNATSIAVUT GOVERNMENT (NG)

BENEFICIARIES

Effective April 1, 2007, members of the Labrador Inuit Association (LIA) and the Labrador Inuit Health Commission (LIHC) will be recognized by the Nunatsiavut Government (NG) as members. This body will assume complete responsibility for the delivery of medical supplies and equipment (MS&E) benefits to its members. Therefore, NG members will no longer be eligible to receive NIHB benefits on or after this date.

Any claims with a date of service on or after April 1, 2007, or any prior approval (PA) requests that would apply to dates of service after April 1, 2007, must be forwarded to NG for consideration to the following address:

**Nunatsiavut Department of Health & Social
Development
P.O. Box 496, Station C
Happy Valley-Goose Bay, NL
A0P 1C0**

For additional information, you may also contact the NG at the following number: **1-866-606-9750**.

SMALLEST PACKAGE SIZE

For over the counter and MS&E items where the prescription does not indicate the quantity to be dispensed and the prescribed item comes only in pre-packaged

amounts, the NIHB Program will pay costs for the package size closest to the quantity prescribed but not exceeding that quantity. This is subject to audit and cost differences between the amounts paid and the smallest available package sizes will be recovered.

REMINDER – CLAIMS WITH PA ARE SUBJECT TO AUDIT

Please note that all paid MS&E claims are subject to audit. This applies to all paid claims including those that have received a PA from the NIHB Regional offices. A PA is given by a Regional office when a medical supply or equipment that does not have a full benefit status is prescribed for an eligible client. While audit will not re-evaluate the clinical necessity of the prescribed item for an eligible client, audit will review all other audit criteria as described in the Pharmacy/MS&E Provider Agreement.

The Pharmacy/MS&E Provider Agreement signed by providers allows FCH to verify paid claims against pharmacy records. In Quebec, the right to audit is established under the agreement between the Association Québécoise des Pharmaciens Propriétaires (AQPP) and Health Canada.

CLARIFICATION ON FIRST CANADIAN BENEFITS (FCB) AND NON-INSURED HEALTH AND WELFARE BENEFITS (NIHWB)

FCH is the claims processor for Health Canada's NIHB program. In the coming months, NIHB providers may notice another organization using a corporate name similar to that of FCH, FCB; and a program name similar to Health Canada's NIHB Program, NIHWB.

Please be advised that this company and its program are not related to Health Canada, FCH, or the NIHB Program, and they are not mandated to serve the health care needs of First Nations and Inuit clients.

NIHB FORMS

Please note that, effective immediately, all requests for packages of NIHB MS&E Claim Forms, and NIHB Client Reimbursement Forms must be sent directly to FCH. Please fax a completed *Medical Supply & Equipment Form Supply Requisition* to **(416) 480-6610**.

Most forms associated with the program, including the NIHB claim forms, and other NIHB program documents, are available for download from the NIHB website. Please

visit the 'Resources and Forms' section under 'Health Provider Information' at:

www.healthcanada.gc.ca/nihb

You can also have a copy of a NIHB claim form sent to you by fax, mail, or e-mail by contacting the FCH NIHB Toll-Free Inquiry Centre at **1-888-471-1111**.

NEW WEB TOOL TO RECEIVE NIHB UPDATES
NIHB providers are invited to subscribe to FNIHB's Really Simple Syndication (RSS) feeds to view feeds online or to receive notifications when new information is added to the NIHB website. RSS is a useful tool for keeping up to date on the NIHB Program. When NIHB providers sign up for the program's RSS feed, their feed reader will display a message whenever new information is added to the NIHB website.

A feed reader, also known as an aggregator, allows users to subscribe to news sites, blogs, and other websites with frequently updated content, and to view it at their convenience without cluttering their inbox. RSS feeds have addresses similar to websites but their content can only be viewed through a feed reader.

There are many free feed readers available online. To download the NIHB RSS feeds and/or find out how to download a feed reader, NIHB providers can consult the following Web page:

http://hc-sc.gc.ca/fnih-spni/nihb-ssna/provide-fourdir/res-form/index_e.html

Detailed information about aggregators can be found at the following link:

http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/home-accueil/help-aide/rss_e.html

Please note that NIHB providers can still access information on the NIHB Program through the NIHB Newsletters and, if registered, regular email alerts.

REMINDER - ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE NIHB PROGRAM

Please note the separation of responsibilities between some of the parties involved with the NIHB Program. Examples outlined herein do not list the full range of roles and responsibilities of the parties involved in the program but rather those that directly affect providers.

First Nations and Inuit Health Branch

This Branch of Health Canada is responsible for the policy and management of the NIHB program. This organization also determines the requirements for PA.

The eight FNIHB Regional offices are responsible for

setting pricing guidelines for the NIHB program and the dissemination of program information and policy to provincial governments, providers, and NIHB clients. The FNIHB Regional offices are also responsible for the issuance of and, when applicable, amendment of PA. These bodies are the recommended contacts for providers seeking answers about NIHB program policy, pricing, fees, and PA.

For more information on NIHB and its Regional offices, please consult the following Web page:

http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/home-accueil/contact/fnih-spni/nihbr-ssnar_e.html

First Canadian Health

FCH is contracted to administer Health Information and Claims Processing Services for MS&E benefits on behalf of the NIHB Program. All NIHB providers submit claims for payment to FCH for NIHB MS&E services and benefits provided to First Nations and Inuit clients. FCH is also responsible for the operation of the FCH NIHB Toll Free Inquiry Centre.

The FCH NIHB Toll-Free Inquiry Centre's representatives respond to Canada-wide toll free telephone inquiries from NIHB registered providers in each region on certain aspects of the NIHB Program, as instructed by FNIHB. This includes, but is not limited to, calls concerning claims submission, client verification, provider support, and the payment process. However, no Toll-Free Representative has the authority to issue or amend a PA. Additionally, for reasons of confidentiality, Toll-Free representatives can only answer provider inquiries regarding the provider's own clients and claims.

Whenever a problem is encountered, providers are encouraged to call the FCH NIHB Toll-Free Inquiry Centre at the following number: 1-888-471-1111. The representatives are in place to assist providers personally, or through a referral, as directed by FNIHB.

REMINDER – A COMPLETE AUDIOLOGY ASSESSMENT IS NEEDED WHEN REQUESTING A HEARING AID

The NIHB audiology consultants and the NIHB Review Centre consultants have noticed that requests for new hearing aids are not always accompanied by a complete audiology assessment. Please provide this assessment to ensure prompt review of the request. Incomplete test results could cause delays for the client, who may need to be retested if an incomplete request is submitted.

When submitting the completed PA form, the following documentation is required to support the request for a hearing aid:

- the prescription from the client's doctor;
- the most recent audiometric test (6 months or less);

- current hearing aid information; and
- other supporting medical documentation (as required).

Providers without internet access can contact the FCH NIHB Toll-Free Inquiry Centre at **1-888-471-1111**.

Further, a complete hearing assessment includes:

- case history (lifestyle, physical capabilities, medical history: ENT infections/surgeries vertigo, progression of hearing loss: recent or sudden, gradual or slow);
- otoscopic examination;
- pure tone testing, which includes air conduction thresholds and bone conduction thresholds: air conduction thresholds at 250, 500, 1000, 2000, 4000, 8000 Hz, inter-octave frequencies where the difference between adjacent octave frequencies is 20 dB or greater and 3000 & 6000 Hz where there is history of noise exposure; bone conduction thresholds at 500, 1000, 2000, 4000 Hz when air conduction thresholds are 15 dB and greater; masked thresholds, as required;
- speech audiometry, which includes speech reception thresholds/speech awareness thresholds, word recognition scores; determination of most comfortable levels and uncomfortable levels, as required. If above scores cannot be obtained, please indicate if it is due to the client not understanding the testing provider's language;
- stenger test, as required;
- immittance testing: tympanometry and acoustic reflexes, as required; ipsilateral and contralateral reflexes measured at 500, 1000, and 2000 Hz; administration of Reflex Decay test as required;
- interpretation and explanation of results and recommendations to the client. When necessary, there may be a need to conduct a different method of testing other than the conventional way, e.g. conditioned play audiometry in the case of cognitive impairment.

These tests are mandatory, except when noted as required, and are performed bilaterally.

Prescription needed for hearing aids

A prescription from the client's doctor is needed for all audiology benefits, except for hearing aid batteries and repairs to aids. A medical prescription is required to rule out medical conditions other than hearing loss, and to support the need for an assessment by an audiologist or other hearing aid specialist. The audiologist or other hearing aid specialist will determine the type of device required to meet the client's medical needs as per the NIHB hearing aid benefit list.

To download the current version of the NIHB Medical Supplies and Equipment Health Provider Information Kit from the NIHB website, visit:

www.healthcanada.gc.ca/nihb