



December 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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Pharmacy Benefit Information

Vitamin D Supplements

Vitamin D is a nutrient that helps your body use calcium to build and maintain strong bones and teeth. Vitamin D supplements are covered by NIHB for clients of all ages with a prescription, and pharmacists can prescribe or recommend vitamin D supplements for infants and children.

Fatty fish and egg yolks are natural sources of vitamin D, and in Canada it is added to milk and other food products. Vitamin D is also made in your body when your skin is exposed to the ultraviolet light in sunshine. Some people get enough sunlight to maintain healthy levels of vitamin D, but many don’t – especially if they live in a climate where there isn’t much sunlight during the winter. Not enough vitamin D can cause rickets in children, or osteoporosis (fragile bones) in adults.

Health Canada recommends a vitamin D supplement for all breast-fed infants up to one year of age, and for all adults over 50 years of age. Children and adults may also benefit from a Vitamin D supplement. Talk to your health care provider to see if it is recommended for you.

Medical Supplies and Equipment (MS&E)

Registered Midwives as Prescribers

Effective November 28, 2017, NIHB recognizes registered midwives (RM) as prescribers of MS&E benefits within their scope of practice. This means that, in provinces and territories where midwifery is a regulated health profession, midwives can prescribe pregnancy-related items that are covered by the NIHB Program such as medical grade compression stockings, maternity belts and breast pumps.

Increased Coverage for Breast Pumps

On December 11, 2017, manual breast pumps will become an open benefit when prescribed by an NIHB-recognized health provider (physician, nurse practitioner or midwife). Prior approval from NIHB will no longer be required and the Program will pay up to a maximum of \$65 for a manual breast pump for the birth of each child. For more information, please refer to section 3.1.4. of the [Guide for Medical Supplies and Equipment Benefits \[www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/first-nations-inuit-health/reports-publications/non-insured-health-benefits/guide-medical-supplies-equipment-benefits-non-insured-health-benefits-2017.html\]](http://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/first-nations-inuit-health/reports-publications/non-insured-health-benefits/guide-medical-supplies-equipment-benefits-non-insured-health-benefits-2017.html).

Update on Prior Approval for a Pair of Custom-Made Foot Orthotics

On October 17, 2016, the NIHB Program lifted the prior approval requirement for a pair of custom-made foot orthotics (CMFO) for a trial period of 12 months. The Program will extend this change until March 31, 2018.

Please be reminded that the NIHB Program will pay up to a maximum of \$456 for a pair of custom-made foot orthotics (unless the price is subject to an agreement between a provider association and the NIHB Program). Replacement of custom-made foot orthotics is eligible every two years.

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. Providers who are enrolled with NIHB can bill the Program directly. Please [contact the NIHB Program \[www.hc-sc.gc.ca/contact/fniah-spnia/fnih-spni/nihbr-ssnar-eng.php\]](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/contact/fniah-spnia/fnih-spni/nihbr-ssnar-eng.php) at your Health Canada regional office for assistance finding an enrolled provider.

General Information

Provider Billing and Client Reimbursement

Many providers are enrolled with NIHB and paid directly by the Program, so clients do not have to pay out of pocket for eligible benefits. NIHB recommends that before you receive any item or service, you should confirm with the provider that he or she is enrolled 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.

If you are planning to pay up-front for benefits and then seek client reimbursement from NIHB, you should [contact NIHB \[www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/corporate/contact-us/non-insured-health-benefits.html\]](http://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/corporate/contact-us/non-insured-health-benefits.html) **before purchasing items or receiving services** to confirm that:

- The provider is recognized by NIHB and eligible to provide the product or service;
- The requested item/service is eligible for coverage under the NIHB Program;
- Whether prior approval is required for coverage; and
- The provider's rate for the product or service is fully covered by NIHB.

Transition to Department of Indigenous Services

The Government of Canada recently announced plans to create a new department of Indigenous Services. Bringing Indigenous programs and services together in one department will help us to address the key building blocks of Indigenous wellness, together with our partners, in a more coordinated and effective way.

As part of this change, it is expected that programs and services currently delivered by the First Nations and Inuit Health Branch (FNIHB) of Health Canada, including NIHB, will become part of the new department of Indigenous Services in the future. Engagement has been initiated regarding this upcoming transfer.

We want to assure you that services to NIHB clients will not be affected during this transition. The NIHB Program continues to operate 'business as usual', and our contact information remains the same until further notice. If you have any questions, please contact us at NIHB-SSNA@hc-sc.gc.ca.

NIHB Client Inquiries – General

Email	NIHB-SSNA@hc-sc.gc.ca
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: 1-855-550-5454
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)