



## **MINISTERIAL POLICY**

### **Department of Health and Social Services**

### **Medical Travel – Exceptions**

#### **1. Statement of Policy**

The Department of Health and Social Services will use a patient-centred approach to consider exceptional circumstances, not otherwise addressed in the *Medical Travel Ministerial Policies*, in accordance with this Ministerial Policy (Policy).

#### **2. Principles**

The Department of Health and Social Services will adhere to the following principles when implementing this Policy:

- (1) All residents of the Northwest Territories (NWT) should have access to the necessary and appropriate Insured Health Services.
- (2) The cost of medical travel should not be an economic barrier to access Insured Health Services.
- (3) The Medical Travel program should be transparent and accountable.
- (4) The Medical Travel program is complementary to other medical travel benefit plans and is considered the payor of last resort.

#### **3. Scope**

The Policy sets out the criteria and process by which the Department of Health and Social Services will consider exceptional circumstances that are not captured in the *Medical Travel Ministerial Policies*.

#### 4. Definitions

Client – could be an Eligible Person, a parent or Guardian.

Eligible Persons – NWT residents with a valid health care card who have a Valid Medical Referral to access necessary and appropriate Insured Health Services.

Insured Health Services – services covered by the *Hospital Insurance and Health and Social Services Administration Act* and the *Medical Care Act*.

Guardian - A person who is lawfully entitled to make decisions on behalf of another.

Health Care Provider – a physician, nurse practitioner, registered midwife or community health nurse licensed to practice in the NWT.

Nearest Centre – the nearest approved facility that is available to provide the necessary and appropriate insured health service required for the patient.

Valid Medical Referral – written authorization from a Health Care Provider to refer an eligible person to the nearest centre for necessary and appropriate insured health services from any community in the Northwest Territories.

#### 5. Authority and Accountability

##### (1) General

###### a) Minister

The Minister of Health and Social Services (the Minister) is accountable to the Executive Council for the implementation of this Policy.

###### b) Deputy Minister

The Deputy Minister of Health and Social Services (the Deputy Minister) is accountable and responsible to the Minister for the administration of this Policy.

##### (2) Specific

###### a) The Minister:

(i) may approve changes to this Policy.

###### b) The Deputy Minister or designate:

(i) may make recommendations to the Minister regarding the implementation of this Policy;

- (ii) may delegate the administration and implementation of this Policy;
- (iii) will monitor the administration and implementation of this Policy;
- (iv) will evaluate the Policy periodically and make recommendations to the Minister for revisions to the Policy as necessary; and
- (v) will establish a process in which the exception review is conducted in a consistent and transparent manner.

## 6. Provisions

- (1) The following criteria must be met for an exceptional circumstance to be considered:
  - a) the individual is an Eligible Person; and
  - b) the Eligible Person is faced with extraordinary health needs and/or can demonstrate undue financial hardship as a result of individual or unique circumstances.
- (2) Exceptions will be considered on a case-by-case basis, not on past decisions or precedents.
- (3) The exception request must be submitted in the approved form.

An *Exception Request Form* can be obtained from any health centre, hospital, regional medical travel office or from the Department of Health and Social Services website under Medical Travel.

- (4) The *Exception Request Form* should be sent, either by fax or by email to:

Medical Travel Office  
Fax: (867) 920- 2172  
Email: [MTexceptions@gov.nt.ca](mailto:MTexceptions@gov.nt.ca)

## 7. Financial Resources

Financial resources required under this Policy are conditional on approval of funds in the Main Estimates by the Legislative Assembly and there being a sufficient unencumbered balance in the appropriate activity for the fiscal year for which the funds would be required.

## 8. Right to Appeal

Clients have the right to appeal medical travel decisions.



Glen Abernethy  
Minister

16/3/19  
Date