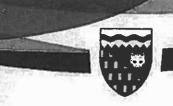
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Northwest Territories Gouvernement des Territoires du Nord-Ouest

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).

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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*.

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4. Definitions

<u>Client</u> – could be an Eligible Person, a parent or Guardian.

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

<u>Insured Health Services</u> – 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.

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

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

<u>Valid Medical Referral</u> – 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

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.

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8. Right to Appeal

Clients have the right to appeal medical travel decisions.

Glen Abernethy Minister