

1. Statement of Policy

The Government of the Northwest Territories will provide medical travel benefits to eligible persons in the Northwest Territories who must travel in order to access necessary and appropriate insured health services.

2. Principles

The Government of the Northwest Territories will adhere to the following principles when implementing this Policy:

- (1) Access to insured health services should be provided to maintain and improve the health and well-being of residents of the Northwest Territories.
- (2) The cost of medical travel should not be an economic barrier to insured health services.
- (3) The Medical Travel program should be transparent and accountable.

3. Scope

This Policy applies to eligible persons in the Northwest Territories who require medical travel

4. Definitions

The following terms apply to this Policy:

Boarding Facilities – Facilities approved to provide accommodation and meals to patients and their authorized non-medical escorts.

Co-payment – the portion of eligible medical travel expenses which must be paid by eligible persons as determined in accordance with the ministerial policy.

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

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

Insured Health Services – services provided in accordance with the provisions of the *Hospital Insurance and Health and Social Services Administration Act* and the *Medical Care Act*.

Medical Travel:

- (1) travel originating within the Northwest Territories which is required to allow eligible persons to access necessary and appropriate insured health services; or
- (2) travel originating elsewhere in Canada in accordance with the ministerial policy established under this Policy.

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

Treatment and Care Facilities – facilities listed in the *Hospital Insurance and Health and Social Services Administration Act* or facilities approved by the Minister to provide insured health services.

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

This Policy is issued under the authority of the Executive Council. The authority to make exceptions and approve revisions to this Policy rests with the Executive Council. Authority and accountability is further defined as follows:

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 to the Minister and responsible to the Minister for the administration of this Policy.

(2) Specific**a) Minister**

The Minister:

- (i) may approve program provisions; and
- (ii) will establish ministerial policies required for the implementation of this Policy respecting, but not limited to:
 - eligibility criteria for medical travel assistance;
 - approved Treatment and Care Facilities for necessary and appropriate insured health services;
 - the Nearest Centre for necessary and appropriate insured health services;
 - designated Boarding Facilities;
 - criteria for patient supports, including medical and non-medical escorts;
 - the amount of the Co-payment;
 - approved intercommunity travel benefits;
 - approved rates of subsidization for ground transportation, meals and commercial accommodations;
 - an appeal process; and
 - other matters deemed necessary for the effective and transparent administration of the medical travel program

- (iii) may amend the ministerial policies referred to in 5(2)(a)(ii) of this Policy;
- (iv) will advise the Executive Council of his or her intention to establish or amend any ministerial policies referred to in 5(2)(a)(ii); and
- (v) will report annually to the public on the administration of the medical travel program for the Northwest Territories.

b) Deputy Minister

The Deputy Minister or designate:

- (i) will establish a procedures manual necessary for the implementation of this Policy; and
- (ii) will monitor and report annually to the Minister on the administration of the medical travel program for the Northwest Territories.

6. Provisions

(1) Eligibility Criteria

- a) A patient must have a Valid Medical Referral and must hold an effective registration with the Northwest Territories Health Care Plan, unless otherwise specified in the ministerial policies.
- b) Medical Travel Assistance will be provided to Eligible Persons in accordance with the ministerial policies established under this Policy.

(2) Appeals

- a) A process will be established to hear appeals of decisions respecting eligibility and the provision of medical travel assistance.
- b) Residents may appeal decisions in accordance with the ministerial policy established under this Policy.

(3) Public Relations

- a) Public engagement will occur prior to ministerial policies being established or amended.
- b) Current ministerial policies will be published on the Department of Health and Social Services website.

7. Exclusions

(1) This Policy does not apply to:

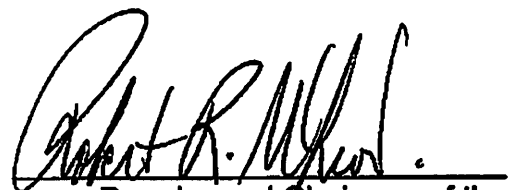
- a) Emergency ground and air ambulance or highway rescue; and
- b) Medical travel originating outside of the Northwest Territories unless travel is in accordance with the ministerial policy established under this Policy.

8. 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.

9. Prerogative of the Executive Council

Nothing in this Policy shall in any way be construed to limit the prerogative of the Executive Council to make decisions or take action respecting the provision of assistance to Northwest Territories residents for medical travel outside the provisions of this Policy.



Premier and Chairman of the
Executive Council