

# MN-S

## Medical Travel Assistance Program

### Policy & Benefit Guidelines

*Created September 19, 2022*



# CONTENTS

1. Purpose and Scope
2. Eligibility
3. Medical Transportation
  - Appointments
  - Transportation
  - Mileage per Kilometer
  - Private Vehicle Travel
  - Taxi
  - Coordinated Travel
  - Medical Taxis
  - Regular Repeated Travel
  - Ambulance
  - Parking
4. Meals
  - Patient in Hospital
  - Food Vouchers
5. Travel Escorts
  - Criteria to Travel as an Escort
  - Reasons for Escorts
  - Escorts for Clients in Hospital
  - Escort Meal Rates
6. Accommodation
  - Hotel Accommodations
  - Accommodation in a Private Home
  - Short-term Stays
  - Long-term or Extended Stays
  - Hotel Liability Waiver Forms
7. Reimbursements
  - Mailing Cheques
  - Returned Cheques
  - EFT Criteria
  - EFT Deposits
8. Exceptions
9. Exclusions
10. Personal Information and Privacy
11. Citizen Responsibilities
12. Complaints Process



# Medical Transportation Assistance Program

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### 1. Purpose and Scope

The Medical Transportation Assistance Program (MTAP) provides low-income Métis Nation-Saskatchewan citizens with financial support and accommodation to attend medical appointments outside their home community. The purpose of the Medical Transportation Assistance Program Policy & Benefits Guidelines is to provide details about the policies, eligibility, criteria, and rates for the Medical Transportation Assistance Program. The Medical Transportation Assistance Program Policy & Benefits Guidelines applies to all Medical Transportation requests administered directly by Métis Nation-Saskatchewan Ministry of Health.

### 2. Eligibility

- The patient must be a registered Métis Nation-Saskatchewan (MN-S) citizen
- Are low-income and can provide proof of income (CRA Notice of Assessment, or Guaranteed income supplement GIS).
- Self-declare if not receiving financial support for medical appointments from any other program (I.E. Social Services, Jordan's principle, non-profit charities, etc.)
- Require travel outside home community to receive medical care that is not offered in citizen's home community
- Have a medical appointment notice/admittance letter and confirmation of attendance/or discharge letter

### 3. Medical Transportation

The Medical Transportation Assistance Program is intended to provide financial support to low-income Métis citizens accessing medically necessary health services not available in their home community. This support may include coverage towards the cost of transportation, meals, and accommodation. Accessing the Medical Transportation Assistance Program requires an application to be filled out by the registered applicant and approved by the MN-



S Health Programs staff and Director of Health. For the purposes of the Medical Transportation Assistance Program, MN-S Health Programs will arrange to provide accommodations, meals, and gas reimbursement to the citizen applying based on approval and will cover the most efficient and economical means of travel, considering the urgency of the situation and the citizen's medical condition. The Medical Travel Assistance Program will not be responsible for any differences in cost if the citizen chooses to make changes to their itinerary provided by the MN-S Health programs staff. *(Please see Section 11. on page 11 for more information on Citizen's responsibilities).*

### 3.1 Appointments

The Medical Travel Assistance Program supports:

1. Travel to medical services covered by a public health facility that is not provided in the home community of the citizen in rural communities. This includes primary care (e.g., eye care, dental, family doctor) or specialist and referral appointments.
2. Taxi services for patients with no access to transportation within city limits.
3. Travel to access traditional healers.
4. Primary care appointments (e.g., eye care, dental, family doctor) **\*up to three primary care appointments per year per person.**
5. Specialist and referral appointments **\*up to twelve specialist and referral appointments per year per person, (Excludes Cancer and Dialysis patients)**
6. Mental health or counselling appointments **\*Up to five appointments per year per person\***
7. Appointments with a confirmation of appointment or attendance from physician following appointment.

### 3.2 Transportation

Coverage will be provided for the most efficient and economical mode of transportation to attend medical appointments. Travel by medical taxi will be taken into consideration of the urgency of the situation and the client's medical condition. All travel must be arranged in such a way that the Client can attend their appointment and return home in a safe, timely manner.



### 3.3 Mileage per Kilometer (Km)

Mileage per Km Standard rates	
Private Vehicle	.20/per Km
Medical Taxi	1.05/per Km
Coordinated Travel	.25/per Km

### 3.4 Private Vehicle Travel

**Eligible:** Where the most appropriate mode of transportation is a private vehicle, only mileage at the established mileage rate is eligible under the Medical Transportation Assistance Program.

**Ineligible:** Additional fuel costs when hiring a driver, requiring a rental car, driving in city limits or vehicle wear and tear are not eligible.

### 3.5 Taxi

Taxis in urban communities can be booked through the MN-S Health Programs staff should a private vehicle not be accessible. Taxi service will be provided to the citizen from their accommodations to their appointment, and after appointment back to their accommodations.

Taxis can be booked to transport a citizen back to their home community after a hospital discharge should the citizen have to be transported to a hospital outside their home community.

### 3.6 Coordinated Travel

If the citizen has multiple appointments within a short period of time or if members of the same household or community are travelling to the same destination for their medical appointments, travel should be coordinated to reduce the number of trips. For multiple citizens travelling to appointments in the same vehicle, reimbursement will be granted to only one citizen at the established mileage rate.



### 3.7 Medical Taxis

Medical taxis are to be used solely for the purpose of returning to home community and/or for high need patients requiring accessible transportation.

MN-S Health Programs are to arrange taxi requests with pre-negotiated providers when necessary.

**A flat reimbursement of 50%** will be provided to citizens using a medical taxi based on a physician's request, or for driver services used without request arranged by MN-S Health Programs.

### 3.8 Repeated Medical Travel

Clients who need to travel repeatedly twice, or more per week on a long-term basis to access medically necessary health services may receive support from the Medical Travel Assistance Program and are eligible for up to 12 specialist trips per year per person, Regular repeated travel beyond 12 specialist trips must be approved through the Exceptions process (*see Section 8. on page 10 for Exceptions*). Excluded are cancer and dialysis appointments as it is understood that appointments can exceed on a weekly basis.

### 3.9 Ambulance

**Eligible:** Coverage for ambulance bills will be provided based on the following criteria:

- i. when transported to hospital in an emergency.
- ii. for transport from a lower-level care facility to a higher-level care facility (i.e., long-term care home to a hospital).

**Ineligible:** Ambulance services that are non-emergent, transport to hospital because of a lack of transportation, coverage from other medical programs and/or benefits. Proof will be required to indicate no other coverage exists with ambulance providers being paid directly.



### 3.10 Parking

Parking fees that is required while attending appointment at hospital will be covered through the Medical Travel Assistance program. Receipts will have to be submitted along with any invoices and/or appointment letters. Only the amounts listed on the parking receipts will be reimbursed and added to the applicants claim.

## 4. Meals

The Medical Transportation Assistance Program provides reimbursement for the following meal rates per appointment:

<b>Fee Schedule for Meal Rates</b>	
<b>Half-Day Rate</b> (For trips under 6 hours)	<b>\$12.50</b>
<b>Daily Rate</b> (For same day trips lasting more than 6 hours)	<b>\$25.00</b>
<b>Overnight Rate</b> (For trips lasting more than 24 hours)	<b>\$50.00</b>
<b>Weekly Rate for overnight trips of one week</b> (7 nights up to one month)	<b>\$250.00</b>
<b>Monthly Rate for extended trips that last a month or more</b> (Past one month or more)	<b>\$500.00</b>

Citizens who are travelling for more than six nights will be arranged to stay in accommodation with cooking facilities if availability is provided from, and given the weekly meal rate for groceries inclusive of an escort, if utilized. Citizen will be requested to provide EFT information for payment to arrive by e-deposit rather than mail.

## 5. Patient in Hospital

Patients required to stay in hospital or admitted to hospital will not be provided meal allowance as meals are provided while receiving care. Escorts assisting patients will be provided a meal allowance should they meet the escort criteria and upon submitting all necessary forms.



## 6. Food Vouchers

Food vouchers can be applied to a citizen's accommodations at participating hotels with a restaurant when requested. Meal rates will apply, and citizen will be unable to claim meal reimbursement.

## 7. Travel Escorts

### 7.1 Criteria to Travel as an Escort

An escort form filled by a physician must be submitted to MN-S Health Programs for an escort to have their travel fees covered or reimbursed.

### 7.2 Reasons for Escorts

Language barriers, physical or mental disability and requires assistance for daily living, unable to drive, child with parent and/or guardian, immobility issues, surgeries where the patient is unable to drive, palliative care.

### 7.3 Escorts for Clients in Hospital

Must be a guardian to a child in hospital and/or assisting the patient with medical decisions and/or language supports as outlined above.

### 7.4 Escort Meal Rates

Escort meal rates will be reimbursed the same as the standard meals rates listed under **Section 4. Meals**

## 8. Accommodation

The Medical Transportation Assistance Program provides overnight accommodation for appointments based on the following reasons: medical justification, time of appointment, distance travelled, location of accommodation, and schedule of coordinated transportation.

Arrangements for accommodation will be made by the MN-S Health Programs staff when requested on the applicant's form or returning citizen's form. Citizens who choose to make different accommodation arrangements or refuse to accept the accommodations booked by the MN-S Health Program staff, may seek reimbursement for \$100 flat rate per night, but will be responsible for any difference in cost.

Private stays or applications to not-for-profit organizations such as the Ronald McDonald House or the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency should be applied to first for stays requiring up to





one to two months accommodation. The Medical Transportation Assistance Program will cover the room cost and any appropriate taxes for the most efficient and economical accommodation.

The Medical Travel Assistance program **will not cover** any incidental fees incurred by the citizen and will require the citizen to sign a hotel liability form prior to any accommodations being booked by the Medical Travel Assistance Program.

For accommodations lasting more than six nights, the MN-S Health Programs staff will try to arrange patients at a hotel with a kitchenette should such accommodation be available.

### 8.1 Hotel accommodations

Hotel accommodations are booked at the most efficient and economical hotels that are set up with an MN-S direct billing account and located in the radius of the citizens appointment.

The Medical Transportation Assistance Program provides hotel accommodations for the following nights based on appointment:

Nights provided based on appointment	
<b>Basic-</b> Dental, Doctors appointments, medical tests, eye appointments *Up to 3 per year	<b>One night</b>
<b>Specialist appointments-</b> referrals, procedures, same day surgeries, etc. *up to 12 per year	<b>One- Three nights</b>
<b>Escort hotel accommodation in emergency-</b> If assisting a patient while in hospital with a doctor letter as required	<b>Three- Five nights</b>
<b>Pregnancy Confinement and/or Cancer treatment lasting more than 6 weeks</b> <i>(Accommodations in a private home or non-profit organization should be first applied prior to seeking assistance from the Medical Travel Assistance Program)</i>	<b>Ten nights to Fifteen nights maximum</b>

### 8.2 Accommodation in a Private Home



Citizens who choose accommodation in a private home will be reimbursed in accordance with the following rates:

Fee schedule for accommodations in a private home		
Rate per Night	Weekly Rate	Monthly Rate
\$50	\$200	\$500

A receipt or invoice must be submitted to claim the reimbursement for accommodations in a private home.

### 8.3 Short-term Stays

Short-term stays are stays that are five days or less. Stays requiring accommodations for more than 5 nights will require an approval prior to extending additional nights if requested and will seek to be booked at a hotel with a kitchenette if available. This is only for the outpatients as requested by their doctor and have an appointment letter indicating the stay is required for more than 5 days.

Escort stays while patient is in hospital will not be extended more than 5 nights. It is recommended escorts plan their itinerary accordingly.

### 8.4 Long-term or Extended Stays

For long-term or extended stays requiring more than 10 days or up to one month, MN-S will require the citizen to seek out accommodation from a private home, non-profit organization, or other affordable accommodation first, and will reimburse the rates set above in **Section 8.2**. Should all other accommodations be exhausted or unable to accommodate the citizen's needs, the MN-S Health Programs staff will book a hotel room with a kitchenette if available and provide 10 to maximum of 15 nights. The Medical Travel Assistance Program will not be responsible for any other fees accrued beyond the maximum 15 nights provided.

### 8.5 Hotel Liability Waiver Forms

All citizens booking accommodations through the Medical Travel Assistance Program will be required to sign a hotel liability waiver prior to hotel accommodations being booked.

Should a citizen not be able to sign due to language or written barriers, the hotel liability waiver form will be read to the citizen to obtain verbal consent.



Citizens who violate the terms and conditions set within the Hotel Liability waiver will be subject to removal from the Medical Travel Assistance program and will be required to pay any incidental fees accrued from the hotel.

## **9. Reimbursements**

A confirmation of appointment letter is required for the appointment being claimed for reimbursement. All gas and meal reimbursements are calculated by MN-S Health programs and submitted for approval every Thursday. MN-S Finance will issue payment two weeks after approval.

### **9.1 Mailing Cheques**

Reimbursements sent by mail will take approximately 1-2 weeks to arrive after issue of payment. Please be advised cheques can take longer to arrive based on Canada Post delivery times and if addresses are incorrect.

Should an address change at the time of application, it is recommended to update the MN-S Health Programs staff to make the necessary changes to avoid any delays.

### **9.2 Returned Cheques**

Any returned cheques sent back to MN-S will be inquired into to update address and obtain a new address for sending.

Any cheques sent to a wrong address will have to wait to be processed once the cheque is returned to MN-S.

### **9.3 EFT Criteria**

Citizens can request to have their reimbursement sent electronically via Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT). An EFT form will have to be filled out and returned to MN-S Health Programs along with a VOID cheque from the citizen's financial institution.

EFT forms can be found on the website or sent to the citizen via email or mail upon request.



## 9.4 EFT Deposits

Reimbursements sent via EFT take 1 week after being sent for approval. Should a citizen not receive their EFT deposit on a timely manner, please contact MN-S Health Programs to update any financial information and to ensure information is correct.

## 10. Exceptions

The following types of travel can be classified as an exception for support and/or additional support and must be sent for approval to the Director of Health and MN-S COO prior to arrangements being made:

- Escort coverage if the citizen is in the care of a hospital for more than ten days and requires language supports and/or help with medical decisions due to a physical or mental disability.
- Regular, repeated travel requiring consistent travel. (i.e., dialysis and cancer treatments)
- Emergency Ambulance transport services such as air-lift ambulance or ambulance service charges over the amount of \$1,000.00.
- Ambulance services outside the province of Saskatchewan.
- Travel to treatment and addiction centers and/or mental health services.
- Specialist or referral appointments beyond 12 months.
- Advanced payment requests for citizens impacted by financial burdens and limiting the ability to travel to special and/or critical appointments outside their home community (i.e. cancer treatments, specialized and life-saving surgeries, dialysis, traumatic events caused by accidents, severe illness, etc). For these requests, a schedule of the appointments or letter of hospital admission must be submitted with additional information to escort, if needed, and EFT information provided. Only meals and gas for the duration of the appointments will be provided in advance. Upon completion of the appointment, a confirmation letter will be required from the citizen to show the appointment was made with no additional reimbursement being issued to the citizen.

Any other requests for support not clearly defined in the guidelines above may be submitted for an exception for approval. **Note:** not all requests will be approved, and decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis.



## 11. Exclusions

Exclusions for the Medical Travel Assistance Program include, but are not limited to:

- Compassionate travel to visit a family member or loved one for support in hospital.
- Travel for funerals.
- Local travel by private vehicle or bus within the citizen's community of residence.
- Travel back to a citizen's community of residence if the citizen becomes ill while away from home other than on medical travel.
- Travel to pick up prescriptions.
- Travel to day care or respite care.
- Accessing medical appointments when travelling outside of Canada.
- Incidental accommodation fees and any applicable taxes.
- Payments for doctor's notes in support of a Citizen accessing the Medical Travel Assistance Program.
- Payment of additional fees, honorarium, or salary to a travel escort.

Exclusions are not eligible for support under the Medical Travel Assistance Program and will not be sent for further approval.

## 12. Personal Information and Privacy

The MN-S Medical Travel Assistance Program has a responsibility to protect personal information under its control in accordance with Saskatchewan's *Health Information Protection Act*. Program user identities will remain protected and confidential. MN-S Ministry of Health may, however, use information such as reasons for medical travel and locations of medical travel for the sole purposes of program evaluation, Métis population health surveillance, and MN-S Ministry of Health-led projects. MN-S will never share program user personal information with other entities unless another program or organization is providing the same support as the Medical Travel Assistance Program to ensure sustainability of medical travel financial resources and remove duplication of financial support

***Please note that these policies are subject to change without notice to program users.***



### 13. Citizen Responsibilities

To best utilize the Medical Travel Assistance Program, Citizens will have the following responsibilities, including:

- Citizens must provide at least five days' notice prior to travelling to access medically necessary services to allow time for travel arrangements to be made. With less than five days' notice, citizens may be denied hotel accommodations, may have to reschedule their appointment and/or pay for their travel up front and seek reimbursement from the Medical Travel Assistance Program later.
- Citizens must get prior approval for any medical travel requests that require an exception.
- Citizens must attend their medical appointment as scheduled and provide a confirmation of appointment after the appointment has been made. Reimbursement will not be processed unless a confirmation of appointment letter has been submitted.
- Citizens unable to attend their medical appointment and reserved accommodations must provide at least 24-hour notice to MN-S Health Programs staff when cancelling their hotel accommodations.
- Citizens who miss scheduled appointments and accommodations may be required to pay any no-show fees incurred and will result in no accommodations being booked for future appointments until the no-show fees have been covered by the citizen. Only in emergency situations with good reason to missed appointments and accommodations may be exempted (i.e., Winter travel and vehicle issues while driving, accidents, sudden medical emergencies).
- Citizens are responsible for calling their medical clinic or provider to obtain an appointment letter or have it sent to MN-S Health Programs on their behalf.
- Citizens are not to use threatening or verbally abusive language towards MN-S Health Programs Staff or Service Providers. Such behavior will not be tolerated and will result in Citizens being removed from the Medical Travel Assistance Program. Should a complaint need to be addressed, please follow the steps listed below under the ***Complaint's Process, Section 14.***



#### **14. Complaints Process**

All complaints should be sent to the Health Programs and Service Manager and consist of the following criteria for review:

- Time and date when issue occurred.
- Name of citizen and contact information.
- Details of the complaint.

All complaints will be reviewed and addressed on a timely and efficient manner with a follow up to the citizen.

