



Health Santé
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Non-Insured Health Benefits

Medical Supplies and Equipment Bulletin
Oxygen Therapy & Respiratory Therapy Benefits

February 2001

The Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) Program provides supplementary health benefits, including Medical Supplies and Equipment, to eligible First Nations and Inuit throughout Canada.

Visit Our Web Site at: www.hc-sc.gc.ca/msb/nihb

This NIHB Medical Supplies and Equipment Bulletin - Oxygen Therapy and Respiratory Therapy Benefits provides information about the oxygen and respiratory therapy benefits available under the NIHB Program. It includes an overview of NIHB policy, the prior approval process, replacement and warranty guidelines. Providers can find more detailed information in the NIHB MS&E Provider Information Kit. Information is also available on the NIHB web site at www.hc-sc.gc.ca/msb/nihb.

In January 1999, a review of the MS&E benefits was undertaken as part of a larger effort to improve the management of the NIHB Program and to ensure that the benefits reflect client needs, current clinical practices, changes in health care delivery and NIHB policy. The changes resulting from the review will be implemented on April 1, 2001. Please note that the range of benefits provided remains the same although additional benefit codes have been added to the Oxygen Therapy and Respiratory Therapy Benefit Lists to clearly identify eligible benefits and to enable the NIHB Program to perform comprehensive benefit utilization analysis and audit activities.

Oxygen Benefit Categories

Oxygen Systems and Equipment
Oxygen Supplies

Respiratory Benefit Categories

Aerosol Therapy Supplies and Equipment
Breathing Apparatus and Supplies
Respiratory Secretion Clearance
Tracheostomy Supplies and Equipment

The following will be implemented on April 1, 2001:

- oxygen therapy benefits must be provided by an oxygen provider who has the appropriate health care staff with regulatory affiliations (registered respiratory therapist or registered nurse familiar with respiratory conditions);
- medical guidelines for the coverage of oxygen benefits;
- oximetry and arterial blood gas tests to be provided with the initial request.

Medical Guidelines for Authorizing Oxygen Equipment and Services

The applicant's condition must be stabilized and treatment regimen optimized before long term oxygen therapy may be considered. Qualifying medical indications are as follows:

- a) A resting PaO₂ on room air equal or less than 55 mm Hg;
- b) A resting PaO₂ on room air between 56 and 59 mm Hg, when there is evidence of:
 - Cor pulmonale
 - Pulmonary hypertension
 - Secondary polycythemia;
- c) Exercise limitation due to hypoxemia with significantly greater exercise capability and/or significantly decreased shortness of breath on oxygen compared to room air (confirmed by objective data);

- d) Nocturnal hypoxemia when nocturnal oxygen desaturation is less than 88% for 30% of the night in spite of appropriate CPAP or bilevel therapy;
- e) New York Heart Association Stage IV Heart Disease with a confirmed diagnosis by a cardiologist and relevant symptomatology and test results;
- f) Palliative care (prognosis of less than 3 months) with a clinical assessment by a physician demonstrating symptomatic benefit.

After three months and after one year of oxygen therapy for medical indications a and b an arterial blood gas on room air or in exceptional circumstances an oximetry test are required; for medical indications c, d, e and f an oximetry test is required.

Prior Approval Process

The NIHB Oxygen Therapy and Respiratory Therapy Benefits Prior Approval Form (see sample on reverse side) must be completed for all oxygen benefits and those respiratory supply items requiring prior approval (PA). For oxygen benefits all sections of the Form must be completed. For respiratory benefits all sections except Section 4 (oxygen prescription) and 5 (arterial blood gas and or oximetry test) must be completed. The Form, the prescription and the required arterial blood gas and oximetry tests must be returned to the First Nations and Inuit Health Branch (FNIHB) Regional Office for review. If a prior approval is granted, a PA number will be provided for billing purposes. If a prior approval is not granted, the provider will be advised of the reason and will be asked to inform the client of his or her right of appeal.

For Ontario Residents - providers must first contact the Ontario Home Oxygen Program of the Ontario Ministry of Health to access oxygen benefits.

For British Columbia - providers are to continue to follow the procedures outlined in the Oxygen Program, Policies, Procedures and Standards recently put in place by the Pacific Regional Office of the First Nations and Inuit Health Branch.

Replacement and Warranty Guidelines

Guidelines outlining the recommended quantities or replacements are based on the average medical needs of clients. Requests exceeding these guidelines may be considered on a case by case basis if medical need is demonstrated. All warranty coverage must be exhausted before repairs or replacements can be considered.

NIHB MS&E Claim Form

The client address section of the NIHB MS&E Claim Form must be completed prior to sending to First Canadian Health for payment. If the address field is not completed, the Form will be returned to the provider for completion.

Please note that claims dated over one year from the date of service will not be considered for payment.

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