

Ministry of Health
Drugs and Devices Division

Frequently Asked Questions: Making Changes to the Trillium Drug Program in Response to COVID-19

Question 1: What has changed?

Trillium Drug Program (TDP) households must incur an out-of-pocket deductible of approximately 4% of their annual income before they become eligible for benefits through the Ontario Drug Benefit Program. For the current 2019/20 benefit year, the annual deductible is calculated based on a household's 2018 tax information. Previously, this deductible could only be reassessed if a household's income in 2019 was 10% or more different than their 2018 income. Income changes in 2020, could not be reflected in the deductible amount until the next benefit year, which starts on August 1st, 2020.

With the new change, the TDP extends the in-year deductible reassessment to allow households to use their 2020 income information for the determination of their deductible in the 4th quarter of the current 2019/20 benefit year (from May 1 until July 31, 2020).

Question 2: How will these changes impact TDP households and other Ontarians?

Existing TDP households, and other Ontarians who are applying to the TDP for the first time, can apply to have their TDP deductible reassessed, due to income changes of at least 10% in either 2019 or 2020 compared to their 2018 income, including income changes due to COVID-19.

Deductibles that are reassessed based on 2020 income will apply to the fourth quarter of the TDP benefit year that starts on May 1, 2020 and ends on July 31, 2020, but not to previous quarters.

Using 2020 income to reassess the TDP deductible for the 4th quarter of the 2019/20 benefit year will ensure that the deductible reflects a household's current reduced income and will help those who are struggling financially due to COVID-19.

Question 3: Will these changes impact Ontarians who are not currently TDP recipients?

Yes, these changes will apply to households who are applying to the TDP as well. New TDP households applying for the current benefit year have the option to use their 2018 household net income for the determination of their TDP deductible, or to apply for reassessment based on either their 2019 or 2020 income information, as long as that 2019 or 2020 income is 10% or more different than their 2018 income. Deductibles reassessed based on 2020 income will only apply to the fourth quarter of the 2019/20 benefit year that starts on May 1, 2020 and ends on July 31, 2020.

Question 4: Will the TDP re-assessment be applied retroactive to the May 1st deductible given the two to four-week turnaround?

Yes. For the current benefit year, the deductible re-assessment based on 2020 income will be applied retroactively to the fourth quarter deductible beginning on May 1, 2020. If a Trillium Drug Program household has an Ontario Drug Benefit eligible drug expense claim from May 1, 2020 that resulted in an overpayment of their re-assessed fourth quarter deductible, the household can submit receipts and any overpayment will be reimbursed to the household by cheque.

Question 5: How long will these changes be in effect?

The change will continue to apply in future years, so that Ontarians who experience income changes will continue to be able to apply for reassessment.

Question 6: Are there any impacts to business with the changes?

There is no impact to business, including no administrative burden. This change will have no financial or administrative impact on pharmacies. The ministry will provide information to pharmacies so they can continue to assist patients in applying to the TDP, as part of their regular front-line service.