

Ontario Drug Benefit Act Regulatory Amendments to Support the Ontario Basic Income Pilot (OBIP) Frequently Asked Questions

1. What regulatory changes were made?

The amendment to Ontario Regulation 201/96 (made under the *Ontario Drug Benefit Act*) creates a new class of eligible recipients under the Ontario Drug Benefit (ODB) Program. Specifically, the amendment prescribes persons who were entitled to receive drug benefits under the *Ontario Works Act, 1997* or the *Ontario Disability Support Program Act, 1997* immediately prior to receiving Basic Income payments under the Ontario Basic Income Pilot (OBIP) as a class of eligible persons for the purpose of the ODB Program. This amendment is retroactive to **July 1, 2017** to align with when the OBIP was first launched.

2. What is the change meant to achieve?

The Ministry of Health and Long Term Care's ODB Program provides drug benefits to various classes of eligible persons, including persons entitled to receive drug benefits under the *Ontario Disability Support Program Act, 1997* (ODSPA) and the *Ontario Works Act, 1997* (OWA). In order to receive Basic Income payments, OBIP participants must withdraw from social assistance (i.e. Ontario Works and the Ontario Disability Support Program). As a result, OBIP participants who were previously eligible to receive drug benefits through the ODB Program because they received social assistance would no longer qualify for ODB coverage on this basis. To ensure that these individuals do not lose their drug benefits during their participation in the OBIP, the government made the change to specify that these individuals continue to receive drug benefits as eligible persons under the ODBA so long as they are in receipt of Basic Income payments.

3. What is the OBIP?

OBIP is a study piloted by the Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS) that will test whether a basic income can better support vulnerable workers, improve health and education outcomes for people with low incomes, and help ensure that everyone shares in Ontario's economic growth. The pilot is enrolling participants aged 18 to 64 (up to 4000 at full implementation) in three pilot locations (Hamilton, Brantford, Brant County; Thunder Bay and the surrounding area; and Lindsay).

4. What is the impact of the change on recipients' ODB drug coverage?

The change will continue ODB drug coverage for individuals who were entitled to receive drug benefits under the OWA or the ODSPA immediately before receiving Basic Income payments under the OBIP.

5. What is the impact of the change on businesses?

There is expected to be no negative impact on businesses.

6. How are OBIP drug claims submitted?

The current process continues, whereby participants of OBIP receive a manual paper drug card valid for three months, which they present when they fill their prescription at the pharmacy. These cards are the same as the manual paper drug card issued to social assistance clients who are not yet eligible for, or do not have, a health card number. This current process is an interim step while a longer term solution is being finalized.

The Ministry of Health and Long Term Care is currently working towards implementing a long-term solution that will reduce or eliminate the use of manual paper cards for OBIP participants. Participants will be able to present their health card/temporary card at pharmacy locations, and pharmacists will be able to enter a designated plan code for the OBIP program into the Health Network System (HNS) which can then be used to process the claim.

Additional Information:

For pharmacies:

Please call ODB Pharmacy Help Desk at: 1-800-668-6641

For all other Health Care Providers and the Public:

Please call ServiceOntario, Infoline at 1-866-532-3161 TTY 1-800-387-5559. In Toronto, TTY 416-327-4282