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**MEMORANDUM**

**Date:** March 4, 2022

**To:** ADP-Registered Home Oxygen Vendors

**From:** David Schachow  
Director, Delivery and Eligibility Review Branch

**Re:** Home Oxygen Therapy Update  
(UPDATE to the memo dated January 6, 2022)

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In a follow up to the memo dated January 6, 2022, the Assistive Devices Program (ADP) is making additional temporary changes to the policies governing funding assistance for home oxygen therapy.

**1. New Clients with Resting Hypoxemia**

To confirm eligibility for resting hypoxemia, the ADP will accept an oximetry study in place of ABGs under the following conditions:

- performing the ABG test poses a medical risk to the applicant, as per our current policy; or
- an ABG test cannot be completed due to the closure of ABG testing facilities.

If ABGs cannot be completed due to the closure of ABG testing facilities, in Section 2, Test Results, the vendor must tick the box indicating "ABGs could not be taken due to medical risk".

As per ADP policy, the vendor must retain in their client's file, documentation indicating that the ABGs were not provided due to COVID-19 and the closure of ABG testing facilities.

The vendor should only submit the application form through the eSubmission process.

## 2. Signatures on the Application Form

The prescriber, the vendor, and the applicant or their agent **must sign and date the application form** as per current policy.

## 3. First-Time Access with Exertional Hypoxemia/12-Month Renewal for Exertional Hypoxemia

To confirm eligibility for home oxygen therapy for exertional hypoxemia, the ADP will accept an exercise assessment performed by the vendor if the applicant/client cannot obtain an Independent Exercise Assessment (IEA) due to the closure of IEA testing facilities.

Prior to completing the exercise assessment, the Regulated Health Professional (RHP) employed by the ADP-registered vendor is advised to review the *Home Oxygen Therapy Policy and Administration Manual*, Section 320, Medical Eligibility Criteria for Long-Term Oxygen Therapy for Exertional Hypoxemia.

- a. To measure the applicant's/client's degree of exertional hypoxemia and response to oxygen therapy, the exercise assessment performed by the vendor must include a walk test on room air and a walk test with oxygen, unless the applicant's  $SpO_2 < 80\%$ .

The RHP **will ask their client to walk as long as possible, at their normal pace.** The RHP can discontinue the exercise assessment at any time if in his/her opinion the walk test should be discontinued due to medical risk to the applicant, for example chest pain, extreme dyspnea or sudden increase in heart rate.

In addition to the requirements under Section 420.04 (Procedure for Submitting Oximetry Printouts) of the *Home Oxygen Therapy Policy and Administration Manual*, the RHP must record the following information on the oximetry study:

- confirm the applicant/client walked on room air/oxygen for as long as possible;
- the reason why the walk test on room air and the walk test on oxygen therapy were discontinued (severe breathlessness, chest pain, oximetry results);
- the length of the rest period between the first walk test and the second walk test; and
- the BORG score on room air and the BORG score on oxygen.

At any time, the ADP may request a copy of the exercise assessment to confirm eligibility and/or for auditing purposes.

The vendor should only submit the application form through the eSubmission process.

- b. If in the opinion of the RHP, the applicant/client cannot complete a walk test due to lack of space that may pose a risk, the RHP can substitute an alternative testing method, if the alternative testing method measures:

- the degree of exertional hypoxemia; and
- the response to oxygen therapy in time.

**Please note, the exercise assessment must confirm that the applicant/client meets the medical eligibility for exertional hypoxemia.**

In addition to the requirements under Section 420.04 (Procedure for Submitting Oximetry Printouts) of the *Home Oxygen Therapy Policy and Administration Manual*, the RHP must record the following information on the oximetry study:

- confirm the applicant/client could not complete a walk test due to space restrictions that posed a risk;
- the alternative testing method used;
- confirm the applicant/client completed the test on room air/oxygen for as long as possible;
- the reason why the test on room air and the test on oxygen therapy were discontinued (severe breathlessness, chest pain, oximetry results);
- the length of the rest period between the first test and the second test; and
- the BORG score on room air and the BORG score on oxygen.

At any time, the ADP may request a copy of the exercise assessment to confirm eligibility and/or for auditing purposes.

The vendor should only submit the application form through the eSubmission process.

#### **4. Annual Re-Assessment**

Under the policies of the ADP, the RHP employed by the vendor must see their client annually to perform an oximetry study; assess if the client's oxygen delivery systems continue to meet the client's medical needs; and if additional training and education is required.

Until further notice, the ADP will waive the requirement for an annual oximetry study and in-home visit, if in the opinion of the RHP employed by the vendor, and the client, their family or their caregiver, an assessment to determine if the client's oxygen delivery system continues to meet the client's medical needs; and/or if any additional training and education required can be completed virtually or over the phone.

#### **5. Ontario Residents with Confirmed or Suspected COVID-19**

Ontario residents with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 who need home oxygen therapy on a short-term basis and do not meet the Program's medical eligibility criteria, the vendor must:

- submit the *First Time Application for Funding Home Oxygen Therapy*;
- under Funding Program Requested check off Long-Term Oxygen Therapy for Resting Hypoxemia for 90 days;

- record on the application form “confirmed COVID-19” or “suspected COVID-19”; and
- **fax the application to the ADP to (416) 327-8192.**

To process applications where the ADP has waived the requirement for test results that confirm eligibility, the Program will process these applications as a palliative claim. Once the application has been approved, the vendor must invoice the ADP following the invoicing policies and procedures for palliative home oxygen therapy.

**Do not:**

- **check off Palliative Care for 90 days under Funding Program Requested when completing the application form; or**
- **submit the application form electronically.**

If funding is required beyond the 90-day funding period, the client must demonstrate that they meet the medical eligibility criteria for resting or exertional hypoxemia. The vendor will submit the Renewal of Funding Home Oxygen Therapy application form. Under Funding Program Requested, the vendor will tick off one of the following:

- Long-Term Oxygen Therapy for Resting Hypoxemia 90 days; or
- Long-Term Oxygen Therapy for Exertional Hypoxemia 90 days.

All questions relating to this memorandum should be sent to [adpvendors@ontario.ca](mailto:adpvendors@ontario.ca).

Thank you for your continued commitment and service to Ontarians during this pandemic.

David Schachow  
Director