

INFOBulletin

Keeping health care providers informed of payment, policy or program changes

To: Physicians, Nurse Practitioners, Hospitals and Clinics

Published by: Health Services Branch

Date Issued: December 21, 2015

Bulletin #: 4663

Re: Changes to publicly funded fertility services

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Changes to publicly funded fertility services:

Further to INFOBulletin #4662 (issued on December 21, 2015), effective December 21, 2015, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care is implementing a new Fertility Program that expands access to In Vitro Fertilization (IVF) and Artificial Insemination (AI) for more patients with all eligible forms of infertility. IVF and AI will be removed from the *Health Insurance Act* as insured services and will instead be funded publicly as uninsured services at participating clinics (both hospital-based and community-based clinics).

New fertility services program

Access to the program is not based on sex, gender, sexual orientation, or family status, and is open to eligible patients with medical or non-medical infertility. Eligible patients will be able to choose if they want to participate in the program.

Under the new program, Ontario will contribute to the funding of one IVF cycle per eligible patient per lifetime. One IVF cycle includes the one-at-a-time transfer of all viable embryos to allow for the possibility of multiple chances for pregnancy and reduce the occurrence of higher-risk multiple births. Ontario will also contribute to the funding of one cycle of fertility preservation (FP) per eligible patient requiring sperm or egg preservation for medical reasons. Ontario will also fund unlimited cycles of AI, including intra-uterine insemination (IUI), for all eligible patients.

In addition to the IVF, FP and AI procedures, various laboratory, embryology and other supporting services are funded under the program.

In line with other Ontario health programs, the expanded Fertility Program will not cover the cost of fertility drugs. Families or their health plans will continue to pay for associated drug costs as well as some ancillary services, such as genetic testing and the storage of embryos.

| Funded Services | | Patient Eligibility |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| AI | Unlimited funded cycles of AI, including IUI | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possess a valid Ontario Health Card |
| IVF | Limit of 1 funded cycle per lifetime* | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possess a valid Ontario Health Card • Are under age 43 years • Have not previously received a funded cycle of IVF under the program |
| FP | Limit of 1 funded cycle per lifetime (sperm or egg preservation)** | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possess a valid Ontario Health Card • Have a medical reason for requiring FP (e.g. undergoing cancer treatment) • Have not previously received a funded cycle of FP under the program |

* Patients are eligible to receive one additional funded IVF cycle if acting as a surrogate.

** Patients receiving one funded cycle of FP would still be eligible for one funded cycle of IVF and could use the previously preserved sperm or eggs as part of that cycle.

What do the changes mean to me as a physician?

Eligibility for the program will not be dependent on a physician referral; however, patients are encouraged to discuss their specific circumstances with their health care provider to determine the most appropriate family building options for them.

In the past, you may have referred patients for access to OHIP-insured fertility services. Although a formal referral is not required for Ontario's new Fertility Program, you may continue to refer patients to participating clinics for appropriate publicly-funded fertility services.

Participating clinics

Clinics participating in the provision of publicly funded fertility services are under contract to provide these services. The list of clinics participating in Ontario's Fertility Program is available online from the ministry's web site at: <http://www.ontario.ca/fertility>

More information about the program is available at:

<http://www.ontario.ca/fertility>