



Northern Health Travel Grant (NHTG) Program

Northern Health Travel Grant (NHTG) Program: if you qualify; funding is provided by the Ministry of Health.

Please Consider Telemedicine Instead of Travel: A telemedicine appointment with Ontario Telemedicine Network is like an in-person visit except you talk to your physician over the internet. This allows you to avoid the growing costs and challenges associated with long distance travel. Ask your health care provider if videoconferencing is right for you.

How the travel grant program works

For eligible applicants, travel grants are based on the distance to their closest medical specialist or ministry funded health care facility able to provide the required health care services.

An applicant must travel at least 100 kilometers (km) one-way to access the closest medical specialist, or ministry funded health care facility services that are not available locally.

What costs does the NHTG program help pay?

Travel:

Whether you drive or travel by commercial means, travel grants are always paid at 41 cents per kilometer (based on return road distance travel) between your area of residence and the location of the nearest medical specialist or ministry funded health care facility that can provide the required OHIP-insured service. There is a deductible of 100 kilometers on your trip.

Refer to the question & answer under the section: “**How is the travel grant calculated**” for further information.

Accommodation Allowance

The NHTG Program offers an accommodation allowance for eligible treatment trip to patients who:

- meet travel grant eligibility criteria;
- travel one-way road distance of at least 200 kilometers to the closest specialist or ministry funded health care facility that is able to provide the required services (e.g. hospital for Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI)) and;
- submit an accommodation receipt in their names or have their name on the receipts as a guest to prove they paid an accommodation expense. For an individual under the age of 18, an accommodation allowance receipt can be in the name of his/her parent/guardian.
- Eligible patients may receive an additional accommodation allowance. The medical specialist or ministry funded health care facility they are referred to will determine if it is necessary for them to spend more than one lodging night out-of-town (in order to access medical specialist services or ministry funded health care facility-based procedures). If this occurs, the necessary number of lodging nights will be specified by the patient in section 1 of the NHTG application and by the medical specialist or ministry funded health care facility provider in section 3 of the NHTG application form, or they can write a letter to the NHTG Program stating: **“in their professional judgement, the accommodation allowance of greater than one lodging night is necessary to access an out-of-town medical specialist health care services, or ministry funded**

health care facility-based procedure.”This letter must be submitted along with an application form to qualify for more than one lodging night’s allowance per treatment trip. Refer to the additional accommodation allowance schedule below.

For eligible patients, the accommodation allowance per treatment trip is:

- \$100 per lodging night up to 2 lodging nights
- \$250 for 3 lodging nights
- \$500 for 4-7 lodging nights
- \$550 for 8 or more lodging nights

Will the NHTG Program cover all my travel costs?

No. The grant helps you pay for some medical travel related cost, but does not cover all expenses, such as meals.

How is the travel grant calculated?

Your travel grant is calculated based on the distance to the closest medical specialist or ministry funded health care facility. The one-way road distance is multiplied by 2, a deductible of 100 kilometers is subtracted, then the remaining distance is multiplied by 41 cents per kilometer to determine the grant amount. For commercial travel (air, bus, rail) you must provide an original ticket, receipt or itinerary showing a fare paid, who is travelling, the date of the travel and destination. Do not submit meal or gas receipts as these are not required initially and will not be returned. Please keep them until after your application is processed, in the event the ministry asks for them to support your travel.

The grant is the two-way distance minus 100km, multiplied by 41 cents per km.

Example One: Eligible Grant from Point A to Point B (one-way distance = 160km)

The grant is the two-way distance minus 100km multiplied by 41 cents per km - i.e. $((160 \times 2) - 100) \times 0.41 = \90.20 .

Example Two: Eligible Grant from Point C to Point D (one-way distance = 300km)

- 1) Travel Grant Calculation is $((300\text{km} \times 2) - 100) \times 0.41 = \205.00
- 2) Accommodation allowance = \$100.00
- 3) Total payment to the patient for the trip from C to D = (1) + (2) = \$205 + \$100 = \$305.00

Example Three: Eligible Grant from Point C to Point D (one-way distance = 300km) and specialist/ministry funded health care facility provider determines in section 3, that three lodging nights are necessary

- 1) Travel Grant Calculation is $((300\text{km} \times 2) - 100) \times 0.41 = \205.00
- 2) Accommodation allowance = \$250.00
- 3) Total payment to the patient for the trip from C to D = (1) + (2) = \$205 + \$250 = \$455.00

You do not qualify for a travel grant if:

- the health care service is not an OHIP-insured benefit
- the care is related to a Workplace Safety and Insurance Board claim
- your employer pays for your medical services and/or travel costs
- another government program or organization pays for your travel e.g.:

First Nations Band/Federal Government, etc.

- the health care services have to do with a private insurance company - for example there is third party liability for medical travel costs, such as medical services related to a motor vehicle accident
- you travel round trip by ambulance
- the health care service is provided by a non-Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC) certified medical specialist, and/or non-RCPSC certified physician in Winnipeg (Manitoba) who is not enrolled on the Manitoba Health Specialist Register; **or** the health care service is provided by a physician who does not hold a specialist certificate of registration issued by the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (CPSO) in a recognized medical **or** surgical specialty other than family **or** general practice, **or** service is not provided in a ministry funded health care facility
- the nearest specialist or ministry funded health care facility is within 100 kilometers of your area of residence

Note: If you travel one way by ambulance and the other way by car or public transportation, you may qualify for a partial grant.

What if my application for an NHTG grant is denied?

You can request an internal review, or reconsideration within 12 months from the date provided on the denial letter mailed to you. Please follow the information and instructions in the denial letter.

If there are **exceptional medical circumstances** surrounding your treatment trip that may allow an **exception to the program** eligibility criteria, you may

appeal your denial decision to the external and independent NHTG Medical Appeals Committee in writing to:

Medical Appeals Committee
c/o Northern Health Travel Grant
Claims Services Branch
199 Larch Street, Suite 801
Sudbury ON
P3E 5R1

Do not apply for a travel grant when:

- you travel to an out-of-town medical specialist when a local physician (less than 100 km from your area of residence) can perform the same service
- your trip is for something other than health care
- another agency or government program pays for your travel
- you are travelling to visit a sick relative in hospital
- your travel is not within Ontario or Manitoba

Who is eligible for a travel grant?

You are eligible if all of the conditions below are met:

- you are an OHIP-insured Ontario resident on the date of treatment, and your primary place of residence is in the districts of Algoma, Cochrane, Kenora, Manitoulin, Nipissing, Parry Sound, Rainy River, Sudbury, Thunder Bay, or Timiskaming
- a northern physician, dentist, optometrist, chiropractor, midwife or nurse practitioner has referred you before the travel takes place
- you are referred to a medical specialist who is certified by The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada

(RCPSC), or recognized by one of the Physician Governing bodies below:

- a Winnipeg (Manitoba) physician enrolled on the Manitoba Health Specialist Register and permitted to bill as a specialist;
- a physician who holds a specialist certificate of registration issued by the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (CPSO) in a recognized medical or surgical specialty other than family or general practice
- you are referred for a ministry funded health care facility-based procedure under the Health Insurance Act performed by a provider in the facility (e.g. a midwife for hospital childbirth; technician for positron emission tomography (PET) scan, or chemotherapy).
- the nearest medical specialist or ministry funded health care facility able to provide the type of care or procedure you require in Ontario or Manitoba is at least 100 kilometers from your area of residence

If you do not have a northern referring provider, you may still qualify for a travel grant. Please contact the Ministry of Health, Claims Services Branch, at 1-800-262-6524 for more information.

What is a Ministry of Health funded health care facility?

A ministry funded health care facility includes services that are directly and indirectly funded by the Ministry of Health. The following are examples of ministry funded health care facilities:

- a cleft lip and palate clinic
- a clinic that tests for low vision

- a clinic that can fit artificial limbs and walking aids and is approved by the ministry's Assistive Devices Program
- the Speech Foundation of Ontario, Toronto Children's Centre
- hospital
- Regional Cancer Centre

Can I see any specialist I choose?

You may visit any medical specialist who meets the above definition, hospital or ministry funded health care facility in Ontario or Winnipeg (Manitoba). However, the travel grant is based on the distance to the closest specialist or ministry funded health care facility able to provide the required health care services.



What is a procedure provided in a ministry funded health care facility?

These procedures include:

- Chemotherapy at a regional cancer centre
- MRI, or dialysis services performed in a hospital
- Ultrasound or Pulmonary Function Testing services made in a hospital

Can a person who helps me travel apply for a grant?

Yes, if the person that helps you during travel is 16 years of age or older. If the travel is by air, rail or bus, you and your travel companion may each be eligible for a grant. If travel is by personal vehicle, you

and your travel companion may be eligible for an equal share of one grant. In addition:

- you must be younger than 16 years of age or the northern referring provider must indicate on the application form that you need a travel companion for health or safety reasons
- you must be accompanied by the travel companion during travel
- a fare must be paid, if travel is by commercial means and a travel receipt(s) must be provided. Air miles, or other loyalty programs are acceptable as a method of payment

If I travel by car/vehicle with another person travelling for a medical appointment, do we each get a grant?

No, only one grant is payable if several individuals are travelling for medical appointments together in the same vehicle. However, if you both meet program eligibility and the one-way travel to the nearest specialist/ministry funded health care facility able to provide needed care is at least 200 kilometers, you may each qualify for the accommodation allowance.

How do I apply for a travel grant?

- 1) Application forms are available from your northern doctor, dentist, optometrist, midwife, nurse practitioner, and chiropractor or [available online](#).
- 2) Please ensure you are using a current version of the application form by referring to the new Section 4 Payment Preference. Fill out **all** your information in section 1.
 - Incomplete or incorrectly completed applications will be returned. This could cause delays in payment.
- 3) Before you travel, you need a referral from a Northern Ontario referring health

care provider. You only need to get the referral section of the application completed once every 12 months as long as the follow-up travel is to the same specialist or ministry funded health care facility. If follow-up visits are made to a different specialist/ministry funded health care facility, a new referral is required. If you are applying for a companion grant, your travelling companion must also fill in the proper information in section 5.

- Women between the ages of 30 & 69 travelling to an Ontario Breast Screening Program do not need to have the referral section completed.
- 4) You must complete a separate application form for each round treatment trip. Only one application can be submitted for each round trip regardless of the number of medical specialists or ministry funded health care facilities visited during that round trip.
 - 5) Make sure your medical specialist or ministry funded health care facility provider you travel to fills out all information in Section 3 of the NHTG application form and this includes the number of necessary lodging nights required during each treatment trip. The medical specialist or ministry funded health care facility provider must sign this section and provide the date the visit or procedure was performed on.
 - 6) Include your accommodation, bus, rail, air travel receipts or itinerary, as well as those for a travel companion (if applicable). NHTG questions and application forms should be directed to the Ministry of Health, Claims Services Branch office in Sudbury. The Sudbury Claims Services Branch address and phone number are located at the end of this brochure.

- 7) Complete the Payment Preference section. If you select the Direct Deposit option, provide a completed bank-issued Payroll Direct Deposit form or void cheque along with your grant application.

Note: Send original application forms only, do not send photocopies.

How much time do I have to submit my application?

All applications must be received by the Ministry of Health, Northern Health Travel Grant Program, Sudbury office, within twelve (12) months from the date of service/treatment.

The Ministry of Health is not responsible for lost or delayed applications, or those sent after 12 months from the date of treatment.

What are the payment options for receiving my grant payment?

1) Direct Deposit Payment Option:

Direct deposit is now available. Your grant payment can be deposited directly into your bank account by choosing direct deposit.

Direct deposit is:

- faster and secure
- convenient and reliable
- an environmentally friendlier way of doing business

2) Cheque Payment Option:

A cheque will be delivered by registered mail to the mailing address provided on your application.

Important Information Regarding Direct Deposit

1) Patient and Third-Party Agencies:

If you choose direct deposit, you must submit a bank-issued Payroll Direct Deposit form or void cheque along with your grant application if:

- this is the first time you have chosen to receive a grant payment via direct deposit; or,
- your banking information has changed since you received your last grant payment via direct deposit.

2) Travel Companions

If you choose direct deposit, you must submit a bank-issued Payroll Direct Deposit form or void cheque along with your completed grant application. Companions must provide a new bank issued Payroll Direct Deposit form or void cheque EACH time an application is submitted. The ministry does not retain banking information for companions after an application is processed.

3) Obtaining a Bank-Issued Direct Deposit Form or Void Cheque

The Payroll Direct Deposit form provides bank account information in place of a void cheque. Your contact information and details about your bank are included. This includes the bank's transit and institution numbers and your account number. This information ensures your payment is directed into your bank account.

Many larger financial institutions offer online access to download and print a Payroll Direct Deposit form. Check online to see if your bank provides access to obtain a Payroll Direct

Deposit form or contact your bank to request a Payroll Direct Deposit form.

Void Cheques

A void cheque is a cheque with the word "void" written across the front, which indicates that it should not be accepted for payment. The cheque can still be used to get the information needed for electronic payments. Remove a blank cheque from your cheque book and write the word "VOID" in large, bold letters across the front of the cheque in pen or permanent ink. If you do not have paper cheques, you may be able to get a void cheque by going to your bank and asking for a printed copy of one. Note: There may be a fee for this service.

How long will it take for my travel grant to be paid?

If your application is approved, the ministry will provide your grant payment within six (6) weeks from the date it receives your correctly completed application form. Please allow six weeks before checking on the status of your application.

Are grants available for travel to an abortion clinic?

Yes. You do not need a medical referral in Section 2 but Section 3 must be filled out appropriately.

Can I apply for an NHTG grant and sign the application form on behalf of my child?

For children under 16 years of age, a parent with custody, a children's aid society or other person lawfully entitled to give consent for a child can complete, and sign the application form on behalf of the child.

Can I apply for an NHTG grant and sign the application form on behalf of an applicant who is incapable of giving Consent?

For incapable individuals who are 16 years of age or older, one of the following ranked persons can act as the individual's substitute decision maker (SDM) and consent or sign the application form on behalf of the incapable individual. If there is no person available and willing to act on behalf of the individual under the first category, someone in the next category can act on behalf of the individual, and so on:

- 1) The patient's guardian or guardian of property, if the consent relates to the guardian's authority to make a decision on behalf of the patient
- 2) The patient's attorney for personal care or attorney for property, if the consent relates to the attorney's authority to make a decision on behalf of the patient
- 3) The patient's representative appointed by the Consent and Capacity Board, if the representative has authority to give the consent
- 4) The patient's spouse or partner
- 5) A child or parent of the patient, or a children's aid society or other person who is lawfully entitled to give or refuse consent in the place of the parent. This paragraph does not include the parent
- 6) A parent of the patient with only a right of access to the individual
- 7) A brother or sister of the patient
- 8) Any other relative of the patient

Who is eligible for an accommodation allowance?

Patients who travel at least 200km one-way to access the closest medical

specialist services or ministry funded health care facility-based procedures must meet all of the following conditions in order to be eligible for the accommodation allowance per treatment trip:

- a) The patient meets the travel grant eligibility criteria items stipulated on the cover page of the Northern Health Travel Grant Application Form: Items #: 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6
- b) The patient travelled at least 200km one-way to access the nearest OHIP insured medical specialist services or ministry funded health care facility-based procedures from his/her area of residence
- c) The patient submits an accommodation receipt in their name, to prove they paid an accommodation expense. For patients under 18 years of age, an accommodation or lodging receipt can be in the name of the parent or guardian
- d) Patients may be eligible for additional accommodation allowance for the number of necessary lodging nights specified in section 3 of the application form by the medical specialist or ministry funded health care facility provider

Why is a receipt required to qualify for the accommodation allowance?

The NHTG Program requires receipts for proof and audit purposes to ensure appropriate spending of public funds.

What is acceptable as a receipt for the accommodation allowance?

Official itemized receipts must be submitted, along with the application. "Itemized receipt" refers to a receipt that lists the item(s) purchased and the individual price(s) for each item. This could include a hotel, motel or bed and

breakfast. The accommodation receipt must include the name of the patient, the date(s) of stay, and a fee paid for the stay. The authorization receipt for a credit or debit card transaction is not considered an itemized receipt.

Where do I submit my receipt(s)?

You must submit your accommodation receipt(s), along with your application to the Ministry of Health, Claims Services Branch, Northern Health Travel Grant Program, 199 Larch Street, Suite 801, Sudbury ON P3E 5R1.

Do I have to pay for accommodation in order to qualify for an accommodation allowance?

In order to qualify for an accommodation allowance, you must meet the criteria stipulated in (a) and (b) on the previous page, and must also have paid an accommodation expense and submit a receipt, in your name, as proof of payment. If you are under 18 years of age, the receipt can be in your parent's or guardian's name.

Can I use reward and/or loyalty programs, such as Air Miles as payment for accommodation?

Yes, use of Air Miles or other loyalty programs are acceptable methods of payment.

I stayed with family or friends, can I qualify for an accommodation allowance?

No, if you have not paid an official accommodation expense, you do not qualify for an accommodation allowance.

I had to stay more than one night. Will the accommodation allowance cover the duration of my stay?

If your medical specialist/ministry funded health care facility provider has specified the necessary number of lodging nights you need, your accommodation allowance amount will cover the specified necessary lodging nights of the duration of your stay (up to a maximum of \$550.00 per treatment trip).

Are travel companions now eligible for an accommodation allowance?

No, travel companions are not eligible for accommodation allowance.

Will my expenses for meals, taxi, etc. be covered if I don't stay at a hotel?

No, the NHTG Program does not cover expenses for meals and taxi.

I lost my receipt and can't get another one. Can you process my accommodation allowance?

No, an accommodation allowance will not be processed unless an original receipt is provided as proof of payment for an accommodation expense.

For more details, contact the Ministry of Health, Claims Services Branch,
Northern Health Travel Grant, Sudbury office:

199 Larch St., Suite 801

Sudbury, ON P3E 5R1

1-800-262-6524

Sudbury Claims Services Branch hours of business are
8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., Monday-Friday (except on holidays).

Telephone calls are answered by the third ring. During periods of higher than normal
call volumes, calls are placed into a queue and answered in order.

Voice mail messages will be returned
within one (1) business day (24 hrs. except on weekends and holidays).

Correspondence (mail, fax) will be responded to
within fifteen (15) business days from the date of receipt.