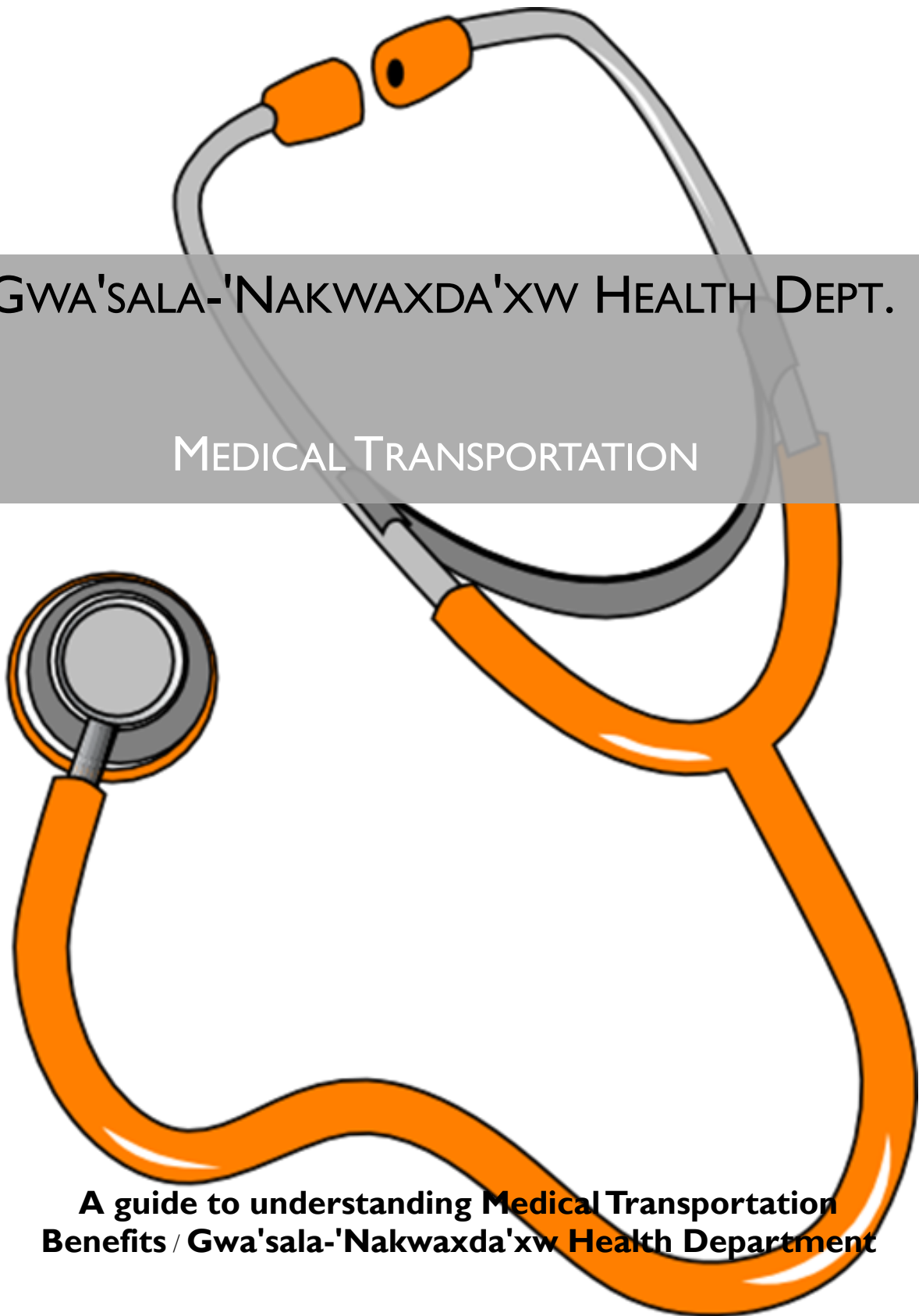


September 2018

GWA'SALA-'NAKWAXDA'XW HEALTH DEPT.

MEDICAL TRANSPORTATION



**A guide to understanding Medical Transportation  
Benefits / Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw Health Department**

## **Medical Transportation (Patient Travel) Brochure**

We now provide Medical Transportation Benefits to all community members who live on reserve, as well as status band members who live off-reserve in the Port Hardy area and in Coal Harbour. The policies are the same for everyone.

### **Patient Responsibilities**

In order for us to process your Medical Transportation as quickly as possible you need to:

1. Inform us of your travel as soon as you know about it - You must give at least **Two Weeks Notice** of the travel - this will allow us enough time to process it. If you do not provide this time then there is no guarantee that you will be able to receive any funding.
2. Get all the paperwork from your Dr. and drop it off or have them fax it to us (250) 949-6811 - date of the appointment, location, purpose, and if you require an escort a note that explains **why** you need the escort (a note that just says you need it is not enough)
3. Communicate with the Medical Transportation Clerk about where you will be staying and how you will be traveling.
4. If you are requested to get more information, please do so as quickly as possible.
5. At your appointment you must have the Dr. or specialist fill out Confirmation of Attendance form. If you do not provide this then you will not be eligible to receive Medical Transportation funding in the future.

### **Who makes the rules for Medical Transportation?**

Medical Transportation is a program funded and regulated by the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA). The amounts and policies are set by FNHA. Staff and Chief & Council cannot overrule the amounts or policies of the Medical Transportation Program.

## **What is the purpose of Medical Transportation?**

This program assists Status Indians to access necessary health care. It is **NOT** meant to cover **ALL** costs of accessing health care:

### **Can I have an escort?**

An escort can only be provided in special circumstances and those reasons **MUST** be in the doctor's letter. If a doctor's letter only says that an escort is required but does not say why then Medical Transportation **CANNOT** provide an escort. Only one escort can be provided. If the patient will have an extended stay in hospital then Medical Transportation will not approve an escort to stay the entire time either - usually just long enough to bring someone to their appt. and then leave.

### **Can I have a driver?**

You must use the cheapest method of travel. For example, if it's cheaper to take a bus than claim mileage, then we can only provide the bus ticket. In addition, if you are approved to take a vehicle then Medical Transportation can only cover the mileage costs - the driver is not able to receive money for meals or hotel.

### **Why do I need all this paperwork?**

The FNHA requires that we have extensive documentation on why the travel is needed, that a doctor is making the referral, how long it will be, and more. We need to submit every single request to FNHA and they review every form. If we do not have all the information they require then they will not approve the request. We need you to have all your paperwork together and submitted to our office as soon as possible - it is **a lot harder** to get approvals done at the last minute. It is **your** responsibility to get your paperwork in - your health is important so make this a priority.

## **Why does it take so long to get a cheque?**

There is a lot of paperwork involved for each Medical Transportation request. Also calls to arrange hotel, meals, transportation, etc. If a case is complicated than many calls and confirmations have to be made as well. Many requests require pre-authorization from the FNHA office in Vancouver. The system is not set up to cover emergencies either - FNHA only processes requests during regular business hours. Once it is approved it still needs to go to the Band Office to have the cheque made out and this is also a time consuming process. **You can make the process go a lot faster by getting your requests in as soon as you are made aware of them, and making sure that you or your doctor have all the written notes and documentation required and give it to the Medical Transportation Clerk. Remember that is your responsibility - so make sure you get everything in immediately.** If the information we need is not provided you may be asked to get the correct information from your doctor. We cannot get the information because Medical Confidentiality laws will **NOT ALLOW** your doctor to give information directly to us - only **YOU** can request the information.

## **What if I live off-reserve?**

We now can provide Medical Transportation benefits to off-reserve band members who status who live in the Port Hardy or Coal Harbour areas. The policies are the same for everyone.

## **Are you picking and choosing who you help?**

No, we wish we could help everyone, but the rules come from FNHA and our band signs a contract saying we will administer the program as FNHA has decided - even if we disagree with them. The rules can seem unfair, they don't cover all costs, the amounts get changed from time to time, and similar situations can have slight differences in how the rules apply. All of these things can make it look like different people are being treated differently. Each request is assessed by the Medical Transportation Clerk, then a supervisor must review it to make sure it follows the correct rules, FNHA then reviews it for final decision.

## **What if I disagree with the decision?**

If you think you are not being treated fairly and should be receiving more benefits than you have been approved for then you can appeal the decision. The appeal must be in writing and directed to FNHA - call **1-800-317-7878** for more details. Remember that the appeal can only look at whether the rules were applied correctly - no appeal can give you more money or benefits than you are entitled to.

## **What can the band do for me if Medical Transportation can't help?**

Medical Transportation is only a supplement - it does not cover all costs or all situations. The Health Department can only administer the Medical Transportation program according to FNHA rules. Sometimes there may be extra help available from the community for emergencies or special circumstances - these may include help from the Bingo fund, or the Emergency Fund from the Trust, or through families and community groups fundraising. These are not part of the Medical Transportation program, but are ways that the community tries to help in exceptional circumstances. If you believe your situation is an exceptional one than you may want to contact the people involved with these initiatives and expect to provide as much detail as possible about your situation and why you were not eligible for all the help you needed from Medical Transportation.

## **Important Information about Medical Transportation**

The funding is only to **assist** you with travel costs, it is **not** meant to cover all costs. You are expected to use your own money to cover costs above those the program covers.

The funding rates are set by FNHA and the band cannot change them.

A Dr or medical specialist must refer you in writing, including who you are seeing, where, and why you need an escort (if needed)

It is your responsibility to ensure the information is received by the Clerk.

You are responsible for getting all your information in at least two weeks before your appointment. The exception is emergency transportation from hospital.

Funding is only provided to travel to the closest location or specialist.

Funding is only provided for the cheapest travel method.

Funding is only provided for the cheapest accommodation available.

Long Term stays (more than 5 days) require authorization from FNHA in advance and more paperwork and therefore more time to process.

Emergency Travel will be processed on the next work day.

If you are scheduled on short notice for an appointment by a specialist or hospital, have them submit in writing to us that they are the ones who scheduled you on short notice and we will try to accommodate the request, although we cannot guarantee arrangements can be made, but if you are approved you can be reimbursed.

## **Dental, Medical Supplies & Equipment, Medical Transportation Benefits, Mental Health & Vision**

A Client has the right to appeal the denial of a medical transportation benefit under the Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) Program. There are three levels of appeals available. **Appeals must be submitted in writing and can be initiated by the Client, legal guardian or interpreter.** At all levels of the appeal process, the Client will be provided with a written explanation of the decision taken.

The recipient or parent/ guardian should forward their letter of appeal and supporting documentation by mail.

There are three levels of appeal available which only the recipient or parent/ guardian can initiate. In order for a case to be reviewed as an appeal, a letter from the recipient or parent/ guardian, accompanied by supporting information from the provider or prescriber must be forwarded to the Health Benefits program.

### **This information includes:**

- The condition for which the benefit is being requested
- The diagnosis and prognosis, including what other alternatives have been tried
- Relevant diagnostic test results (ex: dental x-rays)
- Justification for the proposed treatment and any additional supporting information

The recipient or parent/ guardian should forward their letter of appeal and supporting documentation by mail, clearly marked **“APPEALS - CONFIDENTIAL”**.

For more information on the appeal process or the status of your appeal, please contact the FNHA Health Benefits office at **1.800.317.7878**.

### **APPEAL Level 1**

Director, Health Benefits Operations  
First Nation Health Authority  
#540 - 757 West Hastings St  
Vancouver, BC - V6C 1A1

### **APPEAL Level 2**

FNHA Health Benefits Appeal Review Committee  
Attention: Vice President, Health Benefits  
#540 - 757 West Hastings St  
Vancouver, BC - V6C 1A1

### **APPEAL Level 3:**

CEO  
First Nations Health Authority  
#501 – 100 Park Royal South  
West Vancouver, BC - V7T 1A2

### Medical Travel Appeal Form

Name:	Birthdate:
Mailing address:	Contact number: <input type="checkbox"/> Tick if this is text only number
Signing this form means that you do not feel that you have received the Medical Transportation Benefit you are entitled to and are requesting an appeal by the Health Director. <i>Please note that if you feel that this appeal is also wrong you can appeal to the First Nations Health Authority (see info on reverse of this page). Please use additional paper if there is not enough room.</i>	
1. What is your medical condition and the treatment your Doctor or specialist has authorized?	
2. What is the problem with the Medical Transportation Benefit decision that has been made?	
3. What would you like to see done to fix this situation?	

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Name of Health staff receiving Appeal*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date received by Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw Health staff:*