

Northern Medical Transportation Program

Northern Air Medical Evacuation Services Policy

Saskatchewan Ministry of Health
Updated March 29, 2011

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Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to define the terms and conditions under which the Saskatchewan Ministry of Health will assist eligible citizens with the cost of air medical evacuation services under the Northern Medical Transportation Program.

Note: This policy cancels and supersedes the 'Air Charter' and 'Air Ambulance' sections of the August 26, 1997 Northern Medical Transportation Policy and Procedures manual of the (old) Northern Health Services Branch.

Background

- Ambulance services are not an insured benefit in Saskatchewan. However, Saskatchewan Health has a program in place to improve access to quality care for northern Saskatchewan patients through the Northern Medical Transportation Program, which provides coverage for air medical evacuation for all provincial residents.
- This policy covers Air Medical Evacuation only, using either Saskatchewan Air Ambulance or approved private air carrier.
- Saskatchewan Air Ambulance (also called Lifeguard) provides air medical transfers for critically ill and/or critically injured patients. Persons who require emergency medical evacuation from northern Saskatchewan, but are not sufficiently critical to require Lifeguard's service, may be transported by private air carriers under the Basic to Intermediate Northern Air Medevac service.
- The Northern Medical Transportation Program pays for the air medical transportation of all Saskatchewan residents from health facilities in northern communities to the appropriate nearest hospital, based on the patient's needs. Return flights are not covered.
- The Northern Medical Transportation Program does not pay for air medical evacuation services received by Saskatchewan residents while outside the province (except in limited locations specified in section II below), nor does it pay for the return to Saskatchewan (repatriation) of residents who have a medical emergency outside the province or country. Residents are strongly encouraged to obtain private travel insurance to cover the cost of unforeseen emergency care and transportation while outside of Saskatchewan.

Eligibility

I. Eligible Patients:

In order to be eligible for flight payment by the Northern Medical Transportation Program, all of the following criteria must be met:

1. A medical assessment of the patient must be carried out by an on-site physician or nurse;
2. An immediate or emergency requirement to transport the patient to another hospital for treatment must be established;
3. The medical evacuation is provided to the nearest appropriate health facility,
4. The Provincial Air-medical Coordination Centre (PACC) must provide coordination services for all air medical evacuation requests;
5. The patient must possess a valid Saskatchewan Health Services Plan number; and
6. The patient is not insured for medical flights by any other government agency (see section III below).

II. Service Area:

The Northern Medical Transportation Program will only pay for service provided to eligible Saskatchewan patients within the following areas:

- Athabasca Health Authority,
- Keewatin Yatthé Regional Health Authority,
- Mamawetan Churchill River Regional Health Authority,
- the community of Cumberland House in the Kelsey Trail Regional Health Authority,
- Flin Flon, Manitoba,
- The Pas, Manitoba,
- Fort McMurray, Alberta, and
- Cold Lake, Alberta

(Note that Flin Flon, The Pas, Fort McMurray and Cold Lake are included due to their proximity to the provincial border and their northern location. These centres are the nearest appropriate health facility for several northern Saskatchewan border communities.)

III. Northern Medical Transportation Program is Not Responsible for:

1. Patients who do not possess a valid Saskatchewan Health Services Plan number.
2. Patients whose emergency medical transportation costs are the responsibility of another provincial or federal government agency, such as:

- a) Worker's Compensation.
 - If an individual is injured at work, WCB is responsible for all charges associated with air medical evacuation service.
 - b) SGI
 - If an individual is injured in a motor vehicle accident, SGI is responsible for all charges associated with air medical evacuation service.
 - c) Health Canada, First Nations and Inuit Health Branch
 - If the individual is an eligible First Nations person or Inuit (registered Indian or Inuk), the Non-Insured Health Benefits program of Health Canada is responsible for all charges associated with air medical evacuation service.
3. Service provided outside of Saskatchewan, except those specific locations listed in section II, Service Area, above.
 4. The cost of flights that are arranged or coordinated by someone other than PACC.
 5. The cost of return transportation.
 6. The cost of rescue flights – that is any flight not originating from a health facility or northern nursing station.
 7. Non-emergency transfers to an out-of-province facility as requested by the patient, and/or when such a transfer is not a regular procedure of the air medical evacuation service.

Billing

Approved Northern Air Medical Evacuation charges encompass two components:

- rate per flown mile
- fuel surcharge, where applicable

Additional flight costs, including insurance fees, departure fees, de-icing fees, landing fees, and terminal fees are not included as covered expenses.

PACC provides the Ministry of Health with a record of approved flights. Carriers directly bill the Ministry of Health for eligible Basic to Intermediate Northern Air Medical Evacuation Services. No invoices are generated for Lifeguard (Saskatchewan Air Ambulance) flights.

All claims submitted must state that the trip is from a health facility to the nearest appropriate health facility or hospital.

Contact

Questions regarding the Northern Air Medical Evacuation Service of the Northern Medical Transportation Program should be directed to:

Drug Plan & Extended Benefits Branch
Saskatchewan Ministry of Health
3475 Albert Street
Regina, SK Canada
S4S 6X6

306-787-3125
or
1-800-266-0695