

## **Medical Transportation Assistance Program (MTAP)**

### **Escort Requirements**

- a) In certain cases it may be necessary to cover the costs of an escort who accompanies a patient to the closest medical facility outside their local resident area.
- b) Medical escorts: When a health professional is required by the attending physician to act as a medical escort for out-patients who are eligible for Income Support, payment of transportation and other related expenses of the medical escort is the responsibility of the hospital.
- c) Non-medical escorts: Non-medical escorts may receive medical transportation benefits to cover their transportation, accommodations and meals costs when accompanying a patient travelling to access medically required health services.
- d) Patients must provide a medical note from their referring physician when a claim includes costs for a non-medical escort. The medical note must explain the patient's need for a non-medical escort in relation to their medical condition, illness, injury or treatment. The obligation to obtain sufficient documentation from a referring physician to support an escort request rests with the patient. MTAP does not offer funding for non-medical escort costs when the only reason is to provide the patient emotional support.
- e) Coverage for a non-medical escort may be approved when there is a legal or medical requirement that results in the patient being unable to travel alone, such as when the patient:
  - is a minor;
  - requires alternative legal consent or immediate decision making that cannot be conducted in an efficient matter by phone;
  - requires assistance with activities of daily living, such as dressing, eating and bathing in an outpatient setting;
  - is undergoing an outpatient medical procedure (such as outpatient general anesthetic) or has been diagnosed with a disability or medical condition that impairs their cognitive or physical ability and will require assistance to and from the medical appointment;

- is to receive instruction on specific and essential home medical or nursing procedures and it cannot be given to the patient alone. In this instance, escorts can be approved when the patient is ready and/or is given a time for hospital discharge (example: will be discharged on the weekend). Coverage of a nonmedical escort may be approved for one day in advance of patient discharge or under special circumstances to a maximum of three days in advance of patient discharge (with senior manager approval); or
- is a pregnant woman whose trip is for the purpose of childbirth, including being closer to care while awaiting childbirth.
- Exceptions to this policy would be where there is existing documentation from a recent claim within the current fiscal year that supports the continuing need for a non-medical escort such as:
  - escort travel previously approved as part of a series of related treatments; or
  - patient has been diagnosed with a permanent medical condition that impairs their cognitive or physical ability and will always require assistance while travelling.
- When coverage for an escort has been authorized, the escort must be capable and willing to provide the assistance that the patient needs, for the duration it is required. Depending on the patient's needs, for example, the escort must:
  - be able to sign consent forms or provide a patient history; and
  - be able to provide the required physical and other required care when the patient needs it.
- An escort must not require assistance or special accommodation for their own needs during the trip. This is especially important in situations where the patient may be admitted to hospital, leaving the escort on their own. The escort must:
  - be able to drive if the role includes providing ground transportation; and
  - be able to share personal space to support the patient.
- Medical transportation assistance must always be provided using the most economical means possible. Where the patient is hospitalized for an extended period, escort assistance under MTAP may be limited to the expenses incurred

to travel to/from the patient's place of residence to the treatment facility. It may be more economical for the escort to return home and come back at a later date to accompany the patient.

- When staying at a hotel or hostel, medical escorts and patients will normally be required to share the same room. Separate rooms in a hotel or hostel may be approved if a compelling reason can be provided, for example, the patient and escort are opposite sex adults who are not married to each other.